

THE TIMES

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EVERY WEEKDAY

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Mission to free trapped monitors

SAS ready for rescue in Kosovo

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

A SUBSTANTIAL force of SAS troops is on alert to mount a "high risk" rescue operation in Kosovo if any unarmed international monitors in the Yugoslav province are taken hostage.

The decision to enlist the SAS for hostage-rescue in Kosovo came after Brigadier-General Marcel Valentin, the French commander of Nato's extraction force based in the neighbouring Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said his 2,300 soldiers would be incapable of carrying out such a specialist operation.

The Government has given its approval for a proposed Nato special forces' unit "several hundred strong", to be led by a senior British officer, and the bulk of the force is to be provided by the SAS, although other countries can contribute if required when an emergency arises.

The SAS sent more than 300 troops to the Gulf War in 1991 but this new operation is expected to be the largest infiltration of Special Air Service soldiers for a hostage-rescue mission. The hostage-rescue expertise of the Hereford-based SAS is renowned throughout the world, especially after the 1980 Iranian Embassy siege.

If groups of Kosovo-based monitors from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) were to be taken hostage either by Serb forces or Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas, the SAS

would be flown to the region to prepare for a rescue.

The OSCE team is currently 750-strong but is building up to a total of 2,000 personnel, many of them military or ex-military. Britain is providing 200.

Although the present Nato extraction force is based in Macedonia, permission has not yet been sought from the Government in Skopje for any further deployment of Nato troops in the Macedonian territory. However, it remains the most likely base for a rescue operation.

When Nato began planning late last year for an extraction force to be based in Macedonia, it was always envisaged that a special forces' team would be needed if hostages were taken.

Nato sources said that the proposed force, originally to be 1,500-strong but now expected to 2,300, was never going to be suitably equipped for mounting any operation in a really hostile environment.

The sources said it was planned to be a force that could go over the border to evacuate the OSCE monitors in a "benign environment" and to carry out medical evacuations. The force is equipped with helicopters and armoured vehicles.

The structure and mandate for the extraction unit was also supposed to provide reassurance to President Milosevic, the Yugoslav leader, that Nato

Brussels warned, page 13

Simon Jenkins, page 18

England are back outside

England were readmitted to the Five Nations rugby union championship less than 24 hours after being expelled from the competition over a television deal. Their opening match against Scotland will go ahead as planned on February 20. Page 44

BAE accused

British Aerospace was said to have damaged European cooperation by its £7 billion merger with GECS Marconi Electronic Systems... Page 23

Public to choose 'people's peers'

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JAMES LANDALE

THE public is to be given the power to nominate "people's peers" under proposals published today to scrap the rights of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords.

People will be able to write to the new independent appointments commission which will choose crossbench peers for the interim House of Lords once hereditary peers are banished to the shelves.

Tony Blair has decided that the practice introduced by John Major of allowing the public to nominate people for honours in the twice-yearly lists should be extended.

The deal that led to the sacking of Viscount Cranborne as Tory leader in the Lords — allowing 91 hereditary peers to survive in the interim stage — will not be included in the Bill, but added as an amendment as it passes through the Lords.

Lord Cranborne will today speak in the Lords for the first time since he was sacked. He is likely to urge peers to accept the deal he secured for them.

The death knell will sound today for the 750 hereditary peers when the Bill abolishing

SHE has been dubbed President Clinton's secret weapon. An attractive, high-powered lawyer who will blow away the grey-haired men bent on removing him from office.

As the White House began its defence of Mr Clinton in the impeachment trial last night, the woman nicknamed his Ally McBeal was waiting in the wings.

Nicole Seligman, 42, one of two women lawyers expected to provide a marked contrast with the 12 Republican prosecutors who presented the case against Mr Clinton. The other, Cheryl Mills, is a brilliant black lawyer who joined Mr Clinton's legal team when he entered the White House.

In reality, depicting Ms Seligman as a real-life Ally McBeal is not entirely accurate. Her attractive looks are matched by an incisive legal brain, but she is far more devastatingly ruthless in court than the television character.

George Stephanopoulos, Mr Clinton's former spokesman, coined the "secret weapon" tag and other Clinton advisers have said they are in awe of her talents. "There's velvet on the outside and there's hard rock on the inside," said Lanny Davis, a former White House lawyer. "She can be tough and yet she can turn very charming and feminine,

inside out and has been another force behind the scenes, is also expected to take a central role in the Senate chamber, perhaps ousting Mr Clinton's version of events surrounding the retrieval of gifts he had given to Ms Lewinsky.

As the White House tried to assemble a bigger team for a defence presentation that could take up to the 24 hours allotted, it suffered one setback when Rick Boucher, a Democratic representative, said that he was not available to help. Former Senate majority leader George Mitchell, the chairman of the Northern Ireland peace process, was also mentioned as one who would try to convince the 100 Senators not to convict Mr Clinton on the two articles of impeachment.

The defence strategy is to attack the facts in the prosecution case and insist that even if those facts are true, they do not justify his removal from office because the offences do not rise to the level of "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanours", the constitutional standard for impeachment and conviction.

Fresh polls yesterday showed that 61 percent of Americans thought Mr Clinton should not be convicted, while his approval rating remained at 69 per cent.

Prison on cards for Aitken after he admits libel case perjury

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

JONATHAN AITKEN, the former Conservative Cabinet minister, yesterday faced the threat of a lengthy prison sentence after admitting at the Central Criminal Court charges of perjury and perverting the course of justice.

The disgraced former Tory high-flyer confessed to drawing up a false witness statement which he persuaded his teenage daughter Victoria to sign to support his lies during his unsuccessful High Court libel action against *The Guardian* and Granada TV.

His civil action in June 1997 centred on the allegation by the newspaper and the TV company that he had stayed at the Ritz Hotel in Paris in 1993 at the expense of prominent Saudi Arabian friends while serving as Minister for Defence Procurement.

Aitken, 56, will be sentenced in June at the conclusion of the trial of his co-defendant and former business associate Said Ayas.

For acts intended to pervert the course of justice, the maximum sentence is life and, for perjury, up to seven years.

Said Ayas has yet to enter pleas to charges of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, and doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of justice.

Aitken, of Lord North Street, Westminster, central London, denied two further charges — alleging conspiracy with his ex-wife Lolita and Said Ayas to pervert the course of justice, and doing acts tending and intending to pervert the course of justice.

Crown counsel David Waters accepted those not guilty pleas and the Recorder of London Michael Hyam ordered the two counts to lie on file.

Aitken, who arrived at the



Aitken: will not know his fate until June

Old Bailey with his mother, Lady Aitken, served under John Major, first as Defence Procurement Minister and then as First Secretary to the Treasury, which post he resigned to fight his libel action. When the action collapsed, he was left with a £2 million legal bill.

Aitken, who lost his seat as Tory MP for Thanet, Kent, at the general election, was divorced last year from his wife by whom he has twin daughters.

Continued on Page 4, col 5



"Cheer up — it's not nearly as bad as Jonathan Aitken's"

Clinton's Ally McBeal takes on the Senators

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

which acts as witness by surprise. So if she doesn't get them one way, she'll get them another," said Brendan Sullivan, who led Oliver North's defence team during the Iran-Contra scandal. Ms Seligman helped to defend Mr North — and in the courtroom was mistaken for his daughter by the woman nicknamed his Ally McBeal was waiting in the wings.

Nicole Seligman, 42, one of two women lawyers expected to provide a marked contrast with the 12 Republican prosecutors who presented the case against Mr Clinton. The other, Cheryl Mills, is a brilliant black lawyer who joined Mr Clinton's legal team when he entered the White House.

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ATOL
Sense

Film about 'selfish' du Pré outrages musicians

By SUSIE STEINER

SIX classical musicians, including the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber and the violinist Lord Menihin, have written to *The Times* today expressing outrage at a new film about the life of Jacqueline du Pré.

The film *Hilary and Jackie*, which is to have its premiere today, chronicles the life of du Pré and portrays her as selfish, spoilt and manipulative, according to the musicians. "This is not the Jacqueline du Pré that we, as her friends and colleagues, knew," the letter says.

Mr Lloyd Webber and Lord Menihin are joined in their anger by Itzhak Perl-

man, William Pleeth, Mstislav Rostropovich and Pinhas Zukerman, all of whom worked with du Pré.

Her solo cello performances, particularly of Elgar, in the 1960s made du Pré famous and inspired Mr Lloyd Webber's own career as a cellist; her early death from multiple sclerosis made her turbulent life a focus for scrutiny.

The film, in which du Pré is portrayed by Emily Watson, focuses on the cellist's affair with her sister's husband Kiffen, which was said to be condoned by Hilary to safeguard her sister's fragile emotional state. Watson has been nominated for a Golden Globe for her part in the film.

which is based on a book by du Pré's sister and her brother Piers, entitled *A Genius in the Family*.

But Hilary and Jackie discredits du Pré, according to her supporters. "Jacqueline possessed a wonderful joy in making music and a unique ability to bring that joy to her audience. This is the Jacqueline du Pré that we remember," the letter says.

Lord Menihin knew du Pré well and his daughters were among her best friends; the violinist Itzhak Perlman also worked closely with her.

Letters, page 19
Cinema, page 33



du Pré six defenders

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Thing gives Blair a helping Hand from the back benches

A aficionados of the Addams Family movies will be familiar with a creature called Thing. It is a disembodied hand. It scuttles around the Addamses' creepy mansion doing the family's dirty work. Need a tap fixing, a corpse burying, a mess shovelling under the carpet or a cat throttling in the night? Thing will fix it.

Big-suited Gomez Addams, the head of the household, relies implicitly on the Hand. So does his wife, the palely cadaverous Morticia. How Gomez reminds me of Tony Blair.

At Foreign Office Questions yesterday, a Hand appeared, a man's hand, just before the first question on Europe. This sketchwriter could not say whether the Hand was unattached because there was a body in tow, its owner had placed himself in the least likely spot in the chamber.

Let me explain. The press sits in a balcony over one end of the chamber, arranged like a shallow dress circle above the Speaker's chair. Only the tops of the heads of MPs at this end are visible. The chair

is crowned with a huge canopy, blocking views of the benches beneath and creating a blind spot on one bench on the government side. Its occupant is invisible to almost all the press: invisible to me.

But I could see a Hand. A right Hand. Visible only from the wrist, like Thing.

The Hand appeared some way into Questions yesterday, and settled, fingers fanned, on the edge of the seat. Horrified, I watched it. It seemed to be tentatively following ministers' answers: tensing, fidgeting, relax-

ing ... depending on what they said. No name, no face, but a weird sense of responsibility, control. We have heard of the Minister Without Portfolio (one such, with his Dome, was famous), but now, fidgeting here on the green leather, seemed to be a Portfolio Without Minister.

And it was with European

policy that the Hand looked most concerned. It missed the exchanges on St Helena, ignored Kosovo, and arrived just in time to hear Norman Godman (Lab, Greenock & Inverclyde) ask about the enlargement of the European Union.

The Hand looked relaxed about a careful reply from the

minister, Joyce Quinn. But when a left-winger, Jeremy Corbyn (Lab, Islington N) rose, it scratched angrily at the seat panel. Dennis Skinner (Lab, Bolsover) shouted "When does Albania get in?" The Hand scratched harder.

Andrew Mackinlay (Lab, Thurrock) complained that too few members of the Government were visiting the aspirational members of the EU. Fingers on the Hand quivered. Would it like to visit them, representing the Prime Minister?

"The Tories" Michael

Howard asked a muscular question about joining the euro. The Hand scrabbled impatiently on the bench.

Discussion moved to India and Kashmir. The Hand stretched lazily, fingers outstretched and at rest. When immigration, Iraq and the Middle East were raised, the Hand became bored, drumming fingers. When questions turned to "ethics" in foreign policy the Hand lost interest and curled up.

I glanced at my order paper. Burma, Basra, Nigeria ... no more questions on Europe seemed likely to be reached. Perhaps the Hand had made a similar calculation. It rose into the air above the bench. Then, hovering left toward the door, moved from my vision, hidden by the canopy over the Speaker's chair.

I leapt up. Dashing to a corner from which the Hand's exit might be visible, I strained to see.

Someone was hurrying out. It was Peter Mandelson, pale and tense. The Hand was with him.

PAL RODS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Labour MP leaves wife of 30 years

A Labour MP has left his wife of 30 years for another woman. Denis Murphy, the member for the Northumberland constituency of Wansbeck, admitted yesterday that he had been involved in a relationship with Grace Boyle for "some time". Before being elected in 1997, Mr Murphy, 49, led the controlling Labour group on Wansbeck District Council, where Miss Boyle works in the administration department.

Last October David Cleland, the Labour MP for Tyne Bridge, confirmed that he had left his wife of 33 years, Maureen, after admitting a relationship with his secretary, Brenda Graham.

Millennium call

The millennium celebrations should begin with Midnight Mass at Christmas rather than on December 31, Cardinal Basil Hume, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, said. "The crib will always be more important than the Dome," he told an inter-denominational service.

Law overturned

The European Court has overturned a Greek criminal law, ruling it incompatible with the Treaty of Rome. The judges acknowledged that in principle criminal laws were for nations alone, but Greece could not expect convicted drug users for life as that breached freedom of movement for EU citizens.

Lawrence action

The second-in-command of the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry will face disciplinary action despite announcing his retirement the Metropolitan Police said last night. Detective Inspector Ben Bullock, 49, will go before a tribunal on March 22. He has been accused of neglect of duty.

Royal E-mail



The Royal Mail launched its first stamp with a flat rate to send letters across the Commonwealth and beyond. The stamp, above, costs 30p and is valid from Britain to more than 50 countries, including Tajikistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The price is replaced by a small E in the bottom-left-hand corner.

Wales may lose voice in Cabinet

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

WALES could lose its voice at the Cabinet table after the creation of the Welsh assembly. The end of the office of Welsh Secretary was signalled yesterday at a meeting of the Commons Welsh Affairs Select Committee.

Rachel Lomax, Permanent Secretary at the Welsh Office, hesitated when she was asked by Julian Lewis, a Conservative MP, whether she would join him in a bet that there would be a Secretary of State within ten years. "All sorts of things could happen in ten years," she said.

Her reticence was not lost on MPs and Alun Michael, the Welsh Secretary, said: "The really interesting job is that of First Secretary in the assembly. The role of Secretary of State will develop."

Tacit admission that the role of Welsh Secretary was under threat was seized on by Oppo-

Inner-city schools criticised by Blair

BY HANNAH BETTS

TONY BLAIR was criticised yesterday for undermining teachers after he said he understood parents who refused to send their children to inner-city schools.

Head teachers accused him of giving parents licence to ignore their local comprehensive schools.

Mr Blair's comments came days after it was announced that the Blairs' youngest child, Kathryn, is to follow her two brothers by attending a secondary school several miles from the family home.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's *Today*, Mr Blair said: "When I look at some of the inner-city schools it is no wonder parents feel they have to move their children out." Mr Blair later reinforced his condemnation of inner-city schools in a debate with teachers on the Government's new £60 million performance-related pay scheme.

The Prime Minister told teachers at Moulsham High School in Chelmsford, Essex: "I know from my own experience that there's not enough understanding in this country of the fundamental importance of getting the system right."

John Dunford, general secretary of the School Heads' Association, said: "This is the sort of self-fulfilling prophecy that makes it difficult for schools to succeed in the inner cities. The Prime Minister should be leading the state education system, not undermining it."

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, and Estelle Morris, the School Standards Minister, were also in Chelmsford to announce that teachers who pass annual appraisals will be paid up to £35,000. There will also be £50 million a year to fund bonuses to schools that achieved good or improving results.

Fair Banking

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

TV chat show guest ends up in the dock

Viewer says man she saw chatting to Richard and Judy is a removal man. Adam Fresco reports

A WEALTHY businesswoman, who turned on her television to watch the Richard and Judy chat show, recognised their guest as a removal man who had driven off with £60,000-worth of her possessions six years earlier, a court was told yesterday.

Pamela McMahon had been moving home with the help of John Parsons in 1992 when he allegedly stole a haul including gold rings, necklaces and other items studded with precious stones valued at £30,000, her prized collection of china and crystal, a new hi-fi system and a number of antique paintings, none of which was insured.

Miss McMahon, an American, first spotted Mr Parsons, who at the time called himself Damien West, a few months later, but was too scared to approach him, Southwark Crown Court was told. She thought that she would never see him again.

But in June last year when Miss McMahon switched on ITV's *This Morning* programme, she was saw him happily chatting to Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan. She contacted ITV and the police, who traced the man to Manchester where he had changed his name.

Mr Parsons, 44, from Manchester, who denies one



Parsons denies playing any part in the theft

charge of theft between February and March 1992, insisted that he was innocent. He agreed that he had helped her to move home but said that the theft was "absolutely nothing" to do with him.

Miss McMahon said that she met Mr Parsons after arriving in London to manage a Mayfair apartment block. She was staying in one of the luxury flats as she and her brothers made inquiries about buying the development, but the deal fell through so she decided to move to Chelsea.

Mr Parsons was the maintenance man at the Mayfair apartments and offered to

help her to move, she said. He hired a van and began loading her belongings. Miss McMahon said that on the day of the move, her suspicions were aroused because he seemed to be acting differently.

"I had the feeling something had gone wrong — it seemed that things were not going to any plan he might have and he seemed a bit agitated."

Nevertheless, she allowed him to finish loading and they drove together to Chelsea. Mr Parsons carried a box of china up to the first-floor flat and suggested that she start unpacking while he parked in a better place, she said. About ten minutes later, she noticed that her handbag containing her wallet, keys and credit cards was missing from the table where she had left it.

Seconds later, she was stunned to realise that the same fate had befallen the rest of the property. It had vanished along with Mr Parsons and the van, the jury was told.

She said: "I checked to see if the van was still there and looked out of the window, but could not see it. I went downstairs for a closer look ... but it had vanished."

Miss McMahon said that she had dialled 999 to report the theft to police, but never saw her belongings again.

The trial continues.



Pamela McMahon says that she lost jewellery, china and other items worth £60,000

Chipperfield 'beat chimp till it cried'

By HELEN JOHNSTONE

A MEMBER of the Chipperfield circus dynasty was secretly filmed forcing a sick elephant to perform, pinioning and beating other animals, a court was told yesterday.

The offences alleged against Mary Chipperfield were uncovered when animal-welfare activists infiltrated the farm that she and her husband, Roger Cawley, own in Hampshire and secretly filmed there for several months.

Miss Chipperfield, 61, who appeared before Andover Magistrates' Court yesterday under her married name, Mary Cawley, denies 21 charges relating to animal cruelty and neglect of circus animals, between October 1997 and January 1998. Mr Cawley, 64, and joint proprietor of Mary Chipperfield Promotions Ltd, denies seven charges.

The case had originally been brought by the Animal Defenders charity in a private action but the Crown Prosecution Service took it on after the campaigners produced their

evidence. Miss Chipperfield told police that her treatment of the animals was justified to discipline them and she would do it the same way again.

There were gains from the public gallery as the court was shown footage of a trainer employed by Miss Chipperfield striking an elephant 12 times around the legs and back with a metal rod. One clip showed her briefly watching.

Charles Gabb, for the prosecution, said the evidence suggested that, to the couple, "the ends of training the animals justify the means". He said that in 1997, Terry Stocker, a member of Animal Defenders, had taken up work at the farm caring for the animals, which included tigers, lions, elephants, bears and camels. He set up three video cameras and carried a body camera.

Another group member, Rachel White, posed as his girlfriend. Video film that they handed to police showed an incident in which Miss Chipperfield beat a 10-month-old

chimpanzee called Trudi after it refused to get into its cage.

Mr Gabb told the court: "She used a riding crop to beat the chimp. She also kicked it. It shows maniacal cruelty by this lady to beat it almost mercilessly and when she leaves it to remove its comforter, an orange ball. You can hear the piffling, pathetic cries of the chimp and Mrs Cawley is heard to say, 'You can bloody cry.'

She was alleged to have kicked a camel to get it to stand up, and when that failed, to have beaten it with a stick. She is alleged to have whipped other camels on the back and underbelly with a stick to try to make them walk in a line round the farm's parade ring.

Magistrates heard that Miss Chipperfield made an elephant called Flora perform piazzettes in the ring when it was unwell. Mr Gadd said: "The elephant did not respond to Mrs Cawley's commands. So Mrs Cawley goes up with no reason and whacks it with a very large piece of wood." He said the animals led a miserable existence in which they were shackled for long periods.

Mr Stocker told the court

that he had seen Miss Chipperfield hit the chimpanzee 20 times with the crop in a frenzied beating. She kicked it ten times.

"It was a severe beating. I went back the next day

and saw red marks on Trudi's body, which I photographed."

The stipendiary magistrate, Roger House, was shown footage of Stephen Gills, a trainer employed by the Cawleys, beating elephants with a spade and an iron bar. The court was told that the couple knew that he was violent and cruel to their animals. The trial continues.



Mary Chipperfield and her husband, who deny the charges

Jobcentre bans adverts for Full Monty troupe

By SIMON DE BRUCELLES

A SUCCESSFUL group of Full Monty-style male strippers has been banned from advertising for new recruits in jobcentres.

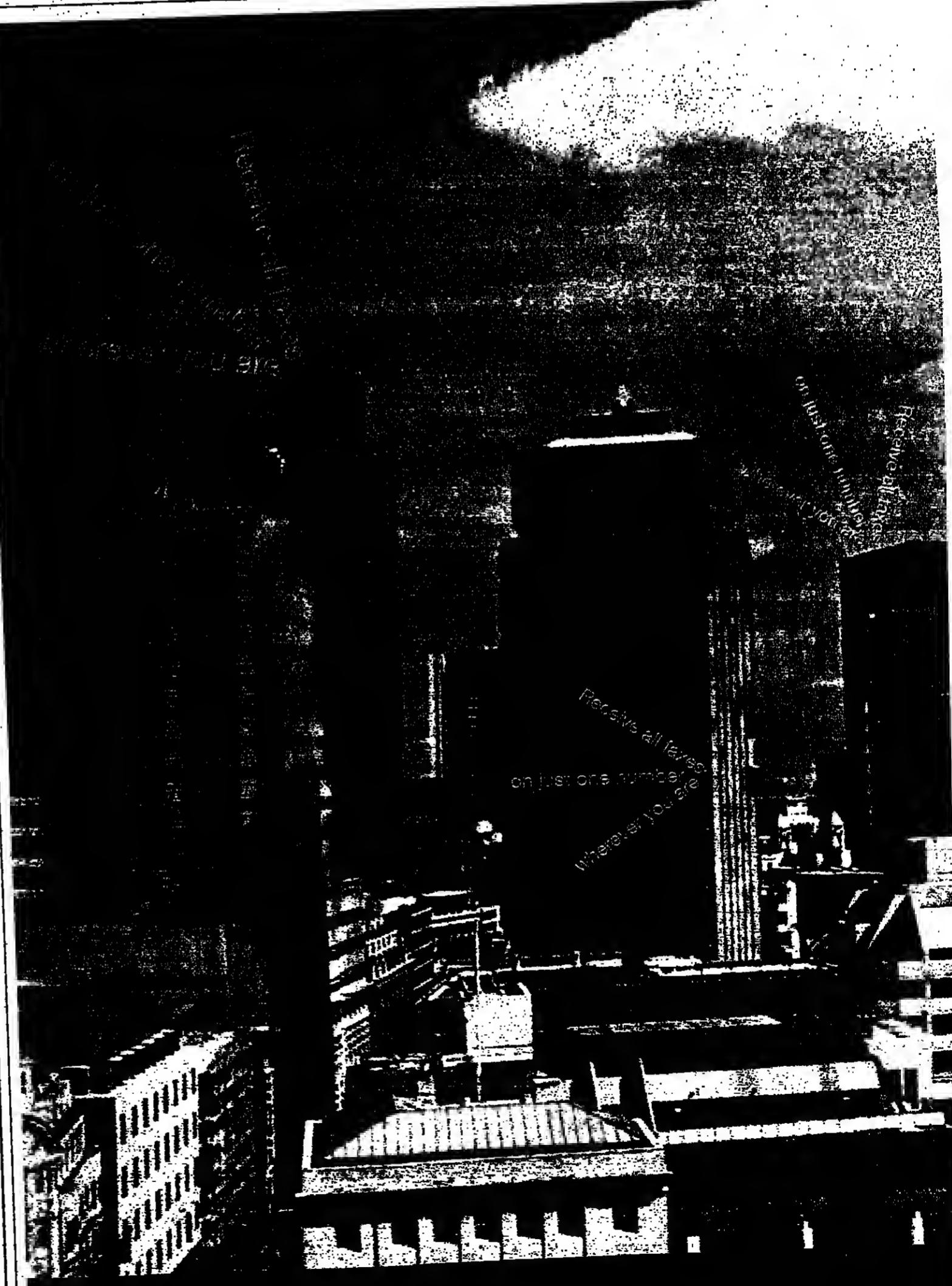
The dancers, who perform under the name Centaur and were the subject of a BBC documentary last year, need new members for a nationwide tour. No qualification or experience are required, but shrinking violates need not apply.

Despite offering the successful candidates between £75 and £100 a day, the ads for "revue dancers" have fallen foul of a Depart-

ment of Employment ban on jobs in the "sex industry".

In the film *The Full Monty*, a group of unemployed men from Sheffield meet at their local job club, decide to take up striping, and become an overnight sensation. The job club's success is unlikely to be emulated in Centaur's home town, Swansea, where jobcentre managers rigidly abide by the rules.

Centaur's manager, Richie Rees, a 34-year-old married father of five, was turned away by both of his local jobcentres, which refused to help find three



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Police worker 'took indecent photographs'

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A PHOTOGRAPHER employed by the police to take pictures of victims of crime took indecent photographs of a woman who alleged that she had been battered, a court was told yesterday.

Peter Sayward, 43, of Lytham, Lancashire, should have seen the 24-year-old woman, who had reported an assault by her boyfriend, at Blackburn police station and confined his attention to bruises on her face, nose and hands.

But he went to her home where he insisted on touching her intimately in order to take photographs of her breasts, and joked about selling the results for a "Page 3" slot.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, said that Mr Sayward asked to see any other marks on her body but she told him there was none. However, he asked her to lift her pyjama top and her crop top. She told the court: "I just did what he told me to."

As soon as Mr Sayward left the woman complained to a neighbour and then to police. Several further allegations of indecent assault emerged as a result of a subsequent inquiry into his work.

Mr Sayward spent 18 years in the Merseyside force before retiring and joining the Lancashire Constabulary as a civilian scenes-of-crime photogra-

pher. He has pleaded not guilty to three charges of indecent assault.

Chris Knight, for the prosecu-

tion, said that Mr Sayward visited the woman in January last year to take straightforward photographs of her injuries. Instead he took "completely unacceptable photographs" of the woman, including a full-frontal view of her exposed breasts.

He steered the conversation

towards sex and sought to cudgel or embrace her under the guise of trying to placate her, though she showed no signs of distress.

He also got her to change into the pyjamas she was wearing at the time of the attack, then physically examined her.

The court was told how Mr Sayward photographed another woman assault victim in August 1997. The 23-year-old woman had suffered bruising to her thigh and went to a police station for photographs to be taken. Mr Sayward photographed her with her skirt hitched above her underpants and felt the bruising in an indecent manner.

The third incident involved

the 23-year-old's mother. Dur-

ing a visit to the victim's

house, Mr Sayward gathered

coins that had fallen from the mother's blouse pocket and had brushed his hand against her breast while placing them back.

The trial continues.

Judges free man jailed for 14 years

Corruption
charges against
Yard detectives
lead to appeal
ruling, reports
Stewart Tendler

A MAN serving 14 years in prison for armed robbery was freed by the Court of Appeal yesterday as a result of criminal charges brought against Scotland Yard detectives.

George Ellis, 57, from East London, had claimed during his trial that a Flying Squad officer had planted false evidence against him.

The court was told that 25 members of the same squad — who cannot be named for legal reasons — could no longer be witnesses in the case because they had either been charged or suspended, or would have been suspended if they had not retired. None of those charged had yet been tried. More members of the unit might be tainted by the allegations, and would risk cross-examination if used as witnesses.

Mr Ellis was cleared of taking part in a £37,500 robbery three years ago. One of the 25 police officers charged was a key officer in Mr Ellis's trial.

John Kelsey-Fry, for the Crown, told the court that new evidence had emerged from two former members of the squad who were now helping Scotland Yard's drive against corruption. As a result, the Crown would not fight the appeal. The two informers would



George Ellis with his son George. He said yesterday: "I am devastated by what has happened and I plan to sue."

eventually be witnesses. None of the corruption allegations had been proved but at the moment the Crown could not use the 25 as witnesses of truth. He said the prolonged investigation into the allegations of dishonesty would take time but it would be wrong to delay Mr Ellis's appeal.

The court was told that Mr Ellis, who was cleared of another armed robbery charge by the court eight years ago,

was convicted largely on the evidence that DNA tests showed that a sample of his saliva matched saliva traces on a bandana worn by a robber.

Stephen Kamish, for Mr Ellis, said at the trial that there were allegations that the saliva had been planted on the bandana. The officer was called from another part of London to collect the saliva.

He went on his own to do a routine job normally done by

a non-specialist officer. At the trial he could not explain why he had been called. Mr Kamish said: "It raises the suspicion he was up to no good."

Quashing Mr Ellis's conviction, Lord Justice Rose, sitting with Mr Justice Maurice Kay and Sir Patrick Russell, said that the Flying Squad officer now charged was a "highly material witness" in the trial.

The saliva was found in a bag thrown away by one of the

robbers with £34,000 of the cash. The other £3,500 has never been recovered. Police said one of the robbers escaped with the cash. He was arrested later. The defence claimed the police took the money.

Lord Rose said the officer who collected the saliva had now been charged with dishonesty. Mr Ellis had suggested he had planted the saliva. In the light of subsequent events the conviction could no longer

be upheld. Lord Rose said. There was no suggestion there should be a retrial. The court ordered a retrial for Tony Zamparelli, 34, convicted with Mr Ellis and jailed for 12 years.

Outside court, Mr Ellis, who called on Scotland Yard to scrap the Flying Squad. He said he had been wrongly convicted twice and sentenced to a total of 27 years in prison. "I am devastated by what has happened and I plan to sue."

GEORGE ELLIS might have felt a sense of déjà vu yesterday as he left the Court of Appeal after being freed from his 14-year jail sentence. Eight years ago the court quashed another armed robbery conviction against him also brought by Scotland Yard's Flying Squad.

Mr Ellis, who has been on bail since last autumn, believes that he was the victim of a police vendetta and corruption. He admits he is no angel: he had started a career of crime by the age of 11. But his only record for armed robbery was 18 years ago and he pleaded guilty.

His present troubles began in 1987 when he was arrested near the scene of an £8,000 bank robbery. His first trial collapsed after the jury was given copies of papers used by his lawyer including his record.

The second trial went ahead and he was jailed for seven years before his lawyers

were told that an officer's prints had been found on the papers. In 1991 he won an appeal.

"I thought that after that there was no way they would come after me," he said. Then 2½ years ago he was arrested

in Woodford, East London, four miles from the scene of a £37,500 robbery.

The case rested on saliva samples matched to a bandana worn by one of the robbers. He claimed the sample could have been smeared on the bandana.

Once again there was retrial. This time someone had walked past two of the first jury and told them they should acquit. Mr Ellis claims the police wanted to stop the trial because his case was going too well. At a second trial he and two other men were convicted.

Inside prison, Mr Ellis heard of the first arrests by Scotland Yard in its anti-corruption drive and asked his lawyer to check whether any of the officers in his case were involved. Nine months later he was told the Crown Prosecution Service would not fight an appeal. One of the officers faced corruption charges.

Mr Ellis, of Bethnal Green, East London, said: "I am sick. I have served 2½ years for something I have not done. I have no confidence in the corruption drive. Give it a couple of years and they will still be up to the same thing."

Bristol inquiry 'is not a trial'

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

AN INQUIRY into the high death rate among child heart patients at Bristol Royal Infirmary is intended to identify minimum acceptable standards for operations and best practice for carrying them out.

Ian Kennedy, the inquiry chairman, said: "It will not be a trial. We are not seeking to apportion blame. We are aiming to discover what happened in Bristol, why it happened, and seeing if there are lessons to be learned which will benefit the NHS as a whole."

The inquiry was ordered by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, after a General Medical Council hearing severely criticised two surgeons for continuing to perform complex operations on babies even though they knew too many of them were dying.

The chief executive of the hospital trust, who was also a doctor, was condemned for failing to use his authority to stop the case.

Smear test errors 'hit confidence'

By RICHARD DUCE

PUBLIC confidence in cancer screening for women has been dented by blunders at a Kent hospital which falsely gave the all-clear to hundreds of patients, a professor told the High Court yesterday.

Thomas Krausz was called as an expert witness for three women who developed cancer and are now infertile after screeners at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital failed to notice abnormal cells during routine smear tests.

Professor Krausz, an honorary consultant at Hammersmith Hospital in West London, said that after checking the slides himself he believed that the screeners should have spotted the abnormalities.

Sandra Penney, 36, Helen Palmer, 36, and Lesley Cannon, 39, are seeking to prove that the East Kent Health Authority is liable. The hearing at Canterbury continues today.



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Punishment gang's brutal 'life sentence'

Martin Fletcher meets a man who paid dearly for giving his friend a lift

ANDREW PEDEN has two stumps where his legs used to be. They were both amputated after he was "kneecapped" last year.

He is still racked by pain. His three young children are deeply traumatised. His wife, Linda, has to carry him up the stairs on her back, lift him onto the toilet or into the bath, and endure his agony each night as he relives the attack in his fitful sleep.

When she goes out she sees the men who committed this evil walking about the streets. "It's wrecked our family," she said. "It's just a living nightmare."

Mr Peden is one of 256 victims of paramilitary beatings or shootings in Northern Ireland over the past 13 months. Andrew Hunter, the Conservative MP for Basingstoke, has said that today in the House of Commons he will perhaps name some of the men responsible.

The aim is to draw attention to these blatant breaches of the Good Friday accord by loyalist and republican paramilitaries whose political representatives sit with impunity in the

Province's new Assembly. Yesterday, Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC chief constable, urged MPs not to identify those allegedly involved in paramilitary attacks as it could prejudice future criminal proceedings.

Andrew Mackay, the shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, said: "These cases prove to me that some of those who signed the accord have not renounced violence. We believe the Government is not ac-

'He cries out every night for help. If he gets an hour's sleep that's it — it's wrecked our family'

knowing the hugely serious situation on many estates where paramilitaries are effectively ruling by terror. This is in violation of the accord. Providing the paramilitaries don't do bombing 'spectaculars' we can say the ceasefires are holding and all is well in the world. It's outrageous."

Mr Peden agreed, saying:

"They have to keep the Progressive Unionist Party and

affair with his wife. Mr Peden says he had nothing to do with the beating, or with the UDA, but the UVF had seen the UDA man in his car.

The next morning he was to take his family to a caravan on the coast for the weekend. Instead, four men bundled him into a car near his home on the Glencarrow estate in Belfast. They took him to a nearby flat, blindfolded him, then beatand

Sinn Fein in the talks to make them work." Mrs Peden said: "They should take someone like Andrew in to tell his story."

By 10pm Mr Peden was barely conscious, but he remembers them dragging him onto some open land and telling him to lie down. They then shot him in both legs with a shotgun and left without calling an ambulance. "They meant me to die," he said.

Mrs Peden heard the blasts, but did not make the connection. She received two mysterious telephone calls, and it was past midnight before the police arrived to tell her the news. At the hospital the doctors told her that her husband had little chance of living. The blood poured out as fast as they pumped it into him, and he twice suffered heart failures on the operating table.

They managed to stabilise his condition enough to be able to amputate his left leg one week later. A few weeks later they had to amputate his mangled right leg, and again he nearly died from loss of blood. He was in hospital for seven months and still returns daily. He sees a psychiatrist and psychologists four times a week and a nurse comes daily

tortured him for ten hours and told him to write a last letter to his children.

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to change his dressings because his left stump remains "like raw steak".

Mr Peden, who is 35 and worked in an electrical wholesaler, used to take his children out camping, fishing or playing football. Now he sits propped up on the sofa or moves round the house "on my bum" while he awaits artificial limbs.

His 15-year-old son, Gary, will not talk about the attack and can hardly look at his father. Drew, 12, is consumed by anger and receiving psychiatric help. "He says 'Mummy, a dog wouldn't do that to another dog,'" Shaunie, aged five, still believes that her father fell down the stairs and "wishes Santa had left Diddy another pair of legs for Christmas".

The Pedens' have received no compensation and have ap-

plied for a new house away from Belfast. Mrs Peden has given up her job to nurse her husband round the clock. "I don't know what it's like having a night's sleep," she said. "He cries out every night for help. He relives it every night. If he gets an hour's sleep that's it. It's wrecked our family."

She knows, the men who attacked her husband, and sees them when she shops. "When they see me they drop their heads or go to the other side of the street," she said. "They are ashamed. They are just evil men. I just hope God repays them."

Mr Peden's body has been broken, but not his will. "I have to come to terms with it. What's keeping me going is Linda and the kids. My goal is to walk down that path with my child. I know I will do it."

New Lad comes up smelling of roses

Mark Henderson reports on how men are being transformed by a cosmetic encounter

taking the trouble to cook a traditional meat-and-two-veg evening meal.

There are signs, too, of "dumbing down" of Britain's leisure time. While the numbers choosing to visit historic buildings or museums fell by up to 7 per cent and trips to the theatre fell by 21 per cent between 1993 and 1998, there was a boom in the cinema and in the fitness industry.

Boots said that sales had risen by 10 per cent in the past year, and that men were now likely to buy skincare products and supermarket scents as well as the shaving creams and shower gels that have long been part of the market.

The report also offers further evidence of the power of the "Dolce effect" on eating habits. It says that, despite hugely increased sales of ready-made food such as pizza, more people are

Winter blues brighten up

BY IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

RELIEF could soon be at hand for sufferers of Seasonal Affective Disorder, the winter condition that induces lethargy, listlessness and depression.

Scientists believe that bright electric lights are the best treatment for the condition, which the Ancient Greeks described.

Chris Thompson, the head of the Mental Health Group at the South Hampshire Hospital, said there was a simple chemical explanation. The pineal gland, in the brain, secretes the hormone melatonin

during the hours of darkness. Melatonin, in excess, has a depressing effect on some people.

Although no more than one person in 20 suffers from Sad symptoms, nine out of ten find that they have minor changes in energy, appetite or weight during the winter months.

Professor Thompson said that trials had shown that Sad responds to treatment with bright artificial light. This tricked the pineal gland into thinking there was enough daylight around to stop pro-

ducing melatonin and no excess built up.

Normal lighting is too dim to make much impact, but new "bright lights" with an output similar to summer daylight can satisfy the pineal gland in an hour or so. However, the lights are not cheap: Philips has just marketed its Original Bright Light for £199. Turn it down and you can use it as an ordinary table light.

For best results the light has to be used early in the day: either at the breakfast table or on the office desk. The annual *British Lifestyles* report, published today by the market researcher Mintel, confirms that expensive cosmetics and fragrances are no longer a luxury for women alone and identifies older teenagers and twenty-somethings as those most likely to "take an interest in their appearance, grooming and health". Sales of male moisturisers and exfoliants, aftershave and shaving products have dou-



Andrew Peden with his 12-year-old son, Drew. Mr Peden's legs were amputated after he was beaten and shot

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Higher n

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999



The spring look from M&S: from left, cotton-stretch polo neck and trousers with raincoat; wool-stripe jacket and trousers; gypsy top and drawstring trousers; and cotton top with short-sleeve shirt

Double Dutch show in the dark

FROM LISA ARMSTRONG,
FASHION EDITOR, IN PARIS

IN A scene could have been straight out of *Prêt-à-Porter*. Robert Altman's celluloid satire, the young Dutch fashion duo Viktor and Rolf presented their couture collection in the dark.

It might seem perverse to show clothes, which live or die by their hand-worked details, by ultraviolet spotlight. The ruse highlighted the white clothes beautifully (and the lint on the audience's attire) but left the black entirely obscured.

Viktor and Rolf, who came to the catwalks via art school, are self-styled conceptual couturiers. Their last collection, featuring huge neck pillows that made the models look like Quasimodo on a bad-posture day, was entitled Atomic Chic. Concepts are best confined to art galleries and philosophy degrees. However, "The Concept", such as it was (and I think it all boiled down to black and white), paled into insignificance when the models began coming out again, but this time with the lights on. Out they all trotted, the Tuxedo, the Dodgy Priest, the Holly Hunter character from *The Piano* and, inevitably, given the ultraviolet, the Skeleton.

Cruel to mock, as Viktor and Rolf can cut an interesting suit, and beneath the concepts there is talent.



One of Viktor and Rolf's creations shown in Paris

Higher marks for some extra sparks

Susie Steiner sees M&S begin its fightback with designs for a brighter spring

CITY analysts were among guests at a fashion show yesterday as Marks & Spencer sought to reverse the downturn in its fortunes with the launch of its new spring and summer collection. The range is titled Fresh Start.

The low-key showing took place at the firm's central London headquarters in a brightly-lit, boutique-style room where clothes hung from lonely metal rails while the bar served coffee with not a little portion of humble pie for past mistakes.

"I think our core customer has perceived that we have let her down,"

said Martin Kemp, who took up his role as commercial executive of knitwear and sportswear this week, having been moved from his previous position as head of lingerie — Marks & Spencer's most successful department, which secures 40 per cent of Britain's underwear market.

"I hope what we have done, after much internal reflection, is learnt a lot of lessons and applied them to this spring range," he added. "We are setting out to sell more goods

this spring than last year." Customers may have complained of poor service, badly displayed merchandise, overpricing and a drop in the product quality on which the firm built its name, but Mr Kemp's own view is that the firm's autumn collection failed on colour, with too much grey and black. Its aim this summer is to redress the imbalance.

Yesterday the rails burst with flashes of fuchsia and turquoise in large patterns on retro-style floaty

dresses. The look seemed more Margot in *The Good Life* than Twiggy in *Vogue*, but the question of serving different generations simultaneously is another problem that Mr Kemp aims to tackle.

After two years of rapid growth, resulting in 290 M&S stores nationwide, Marks & Spencer has suffered a pummelling over the past six months. The troubled high street chain suffered critically poor trading over the Christmas period and is

sued its first profits warning last week. The firm's shares fell to a six-year low as analysts cut their profit forecasts by as much as £200 million.

Marks & Spencer remains dogged by an awkward straddling of the generations, with its middle-aged customers complaining of too much pandering to teenage fashion, while the young still steer clear of its mummy image. Attempts at military combat trousers and utility sports-

wear have floundered in a confusion of age and cut which attempts to please all and ends up pleasing nobody.

Mr Kemp said: "We didn't get rid of products for 40 to 50-year-olds, but the problem was they couldn't find them properly because we put the fashion-based, up-to-the-minute products at the front."

Spring and summer will see the Marks & Spencer success stories return — the reliable staples such as T-shirts, pyjamas and underwear in bright whites and pretty blues, which it does so well.

expectmore



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Final purchase payment, retail customers only. Typical example: monthly payments £171.25, mileage pa 12,000, deposit £4,550, balance £8,450, total credit charges £1,634 (including finance facility fee of £70 payable with first monthly payment). Further charges may be excluded metallic paint + £250. The seven organising publications of the "Car Of The Year 1999" award are: *Autogespräch*, *auto*, *autocar*, *automobile magazine*, *autopista*, *stern*, *autozeitung*.

French salute a four-legged hero

Ben Macintyre tells how the Nazis executed an army horse that dealt one of their soldiers a mortal blow

A HORSE that was executed by a Nazi firing squad in 1940 after it kicked a German soldier to death has won belated recognition as an equine hero of the Resistance.

The exploits of Iris XVI, a swift and ill-tempered mount that had belonged to General Philippe Leclerc, the liberator of Paris in 1944, are celebrated in the latest issue of *Le Casar*, journal of the Saint-Cyr military academy, France's equivalent of Sandhurst.

In the years before the war, Iris XVI (a gelding, despite the name) was widely considered the most unruly horse in the army, as well as one of the ugliest, with "a long back, a shambling gait and straggling tail".

"He looked more like a working horse than a cavalry mount," one Saint-Cyr said. Despite the animal's appearance and temperament, the chestnut was the favoured mount of Philippe de Hautecloque, a Saint-Cyr instructor who later would use the pseudonym Leclerc to prevent reprisals against his family when he joined General de Gaulle in London to rally the Free French.

Iris XVI gained a reputation as a winner among the military horse-racing fraternity, repeatedly beating more favoured and elegant horses on the track, but it remained remarkably untamed and in



The future General Leclerc riding Iris XVI while still a Saint-Cyr instructor before the war; right, in Paris after the liberation in 1944

Iris XVI was shot minutes later. The horse has no recorded grave, leaving open the unpleasant possibility that the champion racer and resistant may have been eaten.

General Leclerc, leaning on the walking stick that was Iris XVI's legacy to him, entered Paris in triumph alongside de Gaulle four years after the execution of his favourite horse.

The indomitable animal was also remembered fondly by other graduates of Saint-Cyr, including one Captain de La Horie, a renowned horseman and officer in the Second Armoured Division. De la Horie was killed during the attack on Strasbourg in November 1944. The vehicle in which he died had, painted across the top of its windscreen, the name of another hero who died for France: Iris XVI.

Yod Sanprunguang in Phisanulok, 208 miles north of Bangkok, on Monday, the embassy said.

The veteran is the sole surviving member of the 1,284 Thai soldiers who served in the European theatre as part of the Royal Thai Expeditionary Force. He worked as an aircraft mechanic with the French armed forces.

To commemorate the eighth anniversary of the end of the war, France has been conferring the Légion d'honneur, its most prestigious decoration, on a 99-year-old Thai veteran of the First World War, the French Embassy here said yesterday.

Gérard Coste, the French Ambassador to Thailand, pinned the medal on the chest of Yod Sanprunguang in Phisanulok, 208 miles north of Bangkok, on Monday, the embassy said.

The veteran is the sole surviving member of the 1,284

Chubais libel claim rejected

FROM ANNA BLUNDY
IN MOSCOW

ONE of the chief architects of Russia's much-criticised privatisation programme, Anatoli Chubais, who is a member of the right-wing coalition set to oppose the Communists and extreme nationalists in the coming elections, has lost his libel case against Sergei Daryienko, a newspaper and political interviewer.

In his weekly review of the news, Mr Daryienko teased Mr Chubais about the \$90,000 (£55,000) advance he had received from a friend and supposed co-author of a planned book on privatisation. He had television audiences in stitches with his jibes against the unpopular Chubais, who is widely held to be partly responsible for the unpleasant shock of market reform.

Mr Chubais sued for libel, demanding 5 million rubles from ORT, the television company, and 500,000 rubles from Mr Daryienko. The regional court found in favour of Mr Daryienko last October. Mr Chubais appealed to the Moscow City Court, which on Monday upheld the original decision.

Stasi file handover sparks mole-hunt

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE most comprehensive mole-hunt in the recent history of the German spy service is to begin thanks to an exchange of intelligence between the Central Intelligence Agency and the German authorities.

True, the moles may now be a bit long in the tooth — some of the newly available data relates to Cold War agents from the 1970s — but for the first time spycatchers will be able to lay bare how deeply the East German Stasi penetrated the defences of the West.

Next month Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser, will hand over to a German emissary a suitcase containing the microfilmed archives of the foreign espionage department (FVA) of the Stasi. The CIA bought the archive in 1989 in an operation codenamed Rosewood soon after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

The files contain the real names of all the sources and officers who reported to Markus Wolf, the East German spymaster. The Germans have been pressing the Americans

for the information ever since. Only recently did the German spy service (BND) receive a copy of the names of the 1,900 East German agents operating in West Germany. But there is much more to come.

The CIA relented only when two former East German computer technicians cracked the code of four magnetic tapes containing reports from all East German spies abroad between 1969 and 1987. The reports were held by the Gauck Agency, which is in charge of secret police archives.

Now a trade has been arranged, there should be some clarity about the killing last year of the commander of the Swiss Guard — there was speculation that it was linked to East German infiltration at the Vatican. Persistent rumours about Stasi contacts with the Labour Party in the early 1980s and Social Democratic parties throughout Europe will be tested also.

Not a good time, in short, for agents enjoying their retirement on the golf course.

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Freetown ruins left to looters

As Ecomog forces
retake the streets,
Sam Kiley visits a
suburb with no
trace of women
and children

SAVED from two weeks of bombardment and rebel atrocities, their homes burnt to the ground, their women abducted as sex slaves and their lives shattered, starving residents of Freetown's Kissy suburb emerged from hiding yesterday to scavenge for food.

Young men, some of them probably rebels themselves, risked summary execution by Nigerian soldiers to squeeze through holes in the walls of the only warehouse still standing at Queen Elizabeth II docks, retaken by Nigerian forces yesterday morning, to steal bags of rice, cartons of cigarettes and a few crates of whisky.

From these few looted goods, they hope to rebuild their lives in a city where food supplies, most of them stored in Kissy, have been stolen by retreating rebels who burned down every building in the suburb.

Melted glass hung from charred window frames of burnt-out homes. Outside many of their owners lay dead in the street, killed by shelling or murdered by the rebels. Acrid black smoke choked Nigerian soldiers patrolling along Blackwall Street as they ducked behind buildings to avoid sniper fire from the surrounding hills.

Some of the survivors from the fighting in the east of Freetown and elsewhere are being sheltered in the city's stadium. But the 35,000 near-starving survivors cannot account for the whereabouts of the thousands who have disappeared.

The bodies of some, and dead rebels from the fighting, floated near the dockside. Vultures revealed the presence of others torched along with their homes. But in the frightening silence of Kissy, broken only by the rattle of sporadic rifle fire, most people seemed to have simply vanished.

Small groups of young men stood on street corners and raised their hands to wave at passing Nigerian soldiers. But after thousands of rebels infiltrated the city posing as civilians two weeks ago, and then used local residents as human shields to overrun Nigerian de-



Local residents warily take to the smouldering streets of eastern Freetown yesterday after the area was recaptured by Ecomog troops

fences, every man in Freetown, and most women, are considered suspect by the Ecomog soldiers.

"Look at him, look at him waving. Where are all the women? These are all rebels, all thieves and bandits," muttered an Ecomog soldier as he levelled his weapon at a group of teenagers loitering near burning buildings and a pile of rotting corpses.

A Lebanese businessman told of how he had been beaten and his 22-year-old daughter, a well known local beauty, had been abducted.

Since today Sankoh formed his Revolutionary United Front in 1991, his men and their allies have abducted hundreds of young women to use as sex slaves.

Those who have managed to escape, all of them HIV positive, have given descriptions of depraved assault.

The extent of these atrocities, and a widespread contempt for the disloyalty of most Sierra Leonean soldiers,

has prompted battle weary Nigerian to take the law into their own hands.

"We let these people wander around the town, we fight for their country, and then they will turn around and stab us in the back. When we catch one we go fire him [we shoot on

him]," said a young Nigerian soldier. As he spoke four cap-

the Red Cross had been caught monitoring Nigerian radio traffic and sending it to the rebels.

"Until now, we have been living on pledges. Some of them have been redeemed by the British Government who sent us vehicles. We have appealed to the whole international community to help us out. We have to put an end to these rebels," he said.

Britain has already given £3 million in direct and multilateral military aid to Ecomog and has spent a further £20 million in emergency humanitarian and reconstruction assistance.

□ Mercenaries held: Despite the unilateral ceasefire, fighting continued in the west of Freetown where two Italian mercenaries, a man and a woman, were taken prisoner, according to a French pilot working under contract to Ecomog.

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The sum is being shared equally by the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence, which will defray some of the costs of HMS Norfolk, the frigate cur-

'In the frightening silence most people seemed to have vanished'

Zimbabwe police grant lawyers access to editor

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

LAWYERS and members of the family of Mark Chavunduka, editor of *The Standard*, were allowed to see him yesterday for the first time since he was detained by Zimbabwean military police eight days ago over a report in his newspaper of an attempted coup to overthrow President Mugabe.

"We hope he and Ray will both be charged tomorrow and released pending trial," Mr Wilson said last night.

Mr Chavunduka's lawyers and family were allowed access to him shortly after the Zimbabwe High Court issued a third order on Monday to Moven Mahachi, the Defence Minister, to bring the editor to court today and to explain his continued detention. Court officials had failed to serve two of the orders on the minister in person after his officials and family said he was away.

Mr Chavunduka's detention has been condemned by unions, churches, academics and by local and international human rights groups who say it violates press freedom and the rule of law.

The police had asked Mr Choto to come in for questioning, indicating that he and Mr

Chavunduka were to be charged. The editor was detained after *The Standard* published a report on January 10 that 23 soldiers, including seven officers, had been arrested for an alleged coup attempt in December.

"We hope he and Ray will both be charged tomorrow and released pending trial," Mr Wilson said last night.

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looter

Serbian police chief dies in fight at village

FROM TOM WALKER
IN RACAK

ABOVE: The Orthodox Church on the Kastanje hill overlooking Starije and Racak, monitors were staging their usual vigil through binoculars documenting minute by minute the village's fate in the mist below.

After a particularly heavy bout of gunfire, a convoy of 20 police vehicles descended from the hill opposite. Shortly afterwards a helicopter went in to remove the police casualties.

Later, a release from the Pristina media centre said that a police deputy chief, Miro Melic, had been killed and two of his colleagues seriously wounded as they "guarded the investigation authorities".

The regional prosecuting magistrate, Danica Marinovic, was said to have again entered the village, although she refused to talk to journalists afterwards. Late on Monday she was reported to have had the back windows of her Lada Niva shot out by a Kosovo Liberation Army sniper as the police removed the Albanian bodies from Racak mosque.

In Pristina itself, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe maintained a discreet silence over the fu-

KOSOVO MISSION



Walker may be forced to leave by Serbs

ture of the Kosovo mission should its ambassador, William Walker, be forced to leave. Serb sources confirmed that the irony of Mr Walker's possible expulsion would be its harm to Ms Marinovic's income as she and her husband own the apartment block where Mr Walker — now dubbed the "ambassador of lies" by the Serb press — rents a flat at considerable cost.

The media centre said it was the point of organising a police press conference to give the official Serb version of events at Racak.

The local authorities and Belgrade have been given heart by reports of what French newspapers are said to be planning to publish today. These reports would throw considerable doubt on the Albanian accounts of what happened at Racak.

Several French journalists have studied video footage of the police attack on the village on Friday, and they have concluded that women and children were not separated from their menfolk, as has been widely reported.

The video footage also shows the police to have been without the masks reported by the Albanians, and the French journalists also postulate that the Albanians both shifted many of the bodies of the massacre victims and mutilated them. "The best proof will come from the autopsies," said a Serb official in Pristina.

"Unfortunately, the Finnish pathologists cannot join us until Thursday," the official added. "But thankfully we have experts from Belarus observing the investigations. I hope the truth will come out before the NATO bombing starts."

Macedonia force on alert as evacuation fears grow

FROM JAMES PITTIFER
IN SKOPJE

THE 2,300 members of the NATO Evacuation Force in Skopje remained on full alert yesterday as the possibility grew of a direct intervention to remove international monitors from Kosovo.

Nato has considerable military resources here, but, as always in the Balkans, things on the ground can look very different from the way they seem in the military planners' offices in New York or Brussels.

It is not clear what the future of the United Nations Preventative Peacekeeping Force will be if the Nato force gets involved in Kosovo. The blue-helmeted troops have been patrolling the borders of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia since 1993.

The Nato operation is French-led and few of the French officers here expect direct involvement. "We are fighters, yes, but only for a big fire," one said. But

NATO WATCH

Clinton's special envoy to the Balkans, said that the KLA bore part of the blame for the tension in Kosovo, even though President Milosevic of Yugoslavia was the main culprit. "We do not want to be the Kosovo Liberation Army's air force," Mr Gelbard told a news conference. "They have to learn to obey the rules too."

Mr Gelbard said that Yugoslav forces were not alone in committing violence in Kosovo and that the KLA, which is fighting for independence for the mainly ethnic Albanian province, had engaged in murder and kidnapping.

However, he described as criminal President Milosevic's refusal on Monday to allow Louise Arbour, the UN war crimes prosecutor, to enter Kosovo. "The expulsion of Louise Arbour has been yet another demonstration that Slobodan Milosevic is an international outlaw," Mr Gelbard said. He declined to comment on the likelihood of airstrikes threatened by Nato. (Reuters)

WORLD SUMMARY

70 miles of cones settle border row

Lagartococha, Peru: President Fujimori of Peru and President Mahuad of Ecuador unveiled a line of concrete cones demarcating a 70-mile stretch of the border between the countries in a remote rainforest region. The meeting marked the end of a dispute that has led to three wars in 100 years.

Rapist to die
Manila: A man who raped his stepdaughter, aged 11, should be put to death by lethal injection "without delay" the Supreme Court ruled, clearing the way for the first execution in 23 years.

'Witch' girl killed
Lausanne: A girl of 11 was beaten to death in front of her two sisters aged five and nine because her mother and aunt believed she was bewitched, Swiss police said. Both adults have been arrested. (AP)

Plea for food aid
Seoul: Famine-hit North Korea has demanded a million tonnes of US food aid in return for allowing an inspection of an underground site suspected of being for nuclear purposes. (AFP)

Panda attack
Beijing: A peasant in Sichuan province has been mauled by a giant panda after falling into its den at a breeding centre. The woman was seriously injured in the attack and underwent an operation. (AFP)

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Belgrade warned of raids 'in days'

By MICHAEL EVANS
AND MICHAEL BINNION

TWO Nato generals gave President Milosevic a warning yesterday to pull back his troops from Kosovo, as the US Ambassador to the alliance predicted that airstrikes could be launched within days if the Yugoslav leader remained defiant.

At a luncheon meeting with Mr Milosevic in Belgrade, General Wesley Clark, Nato's supreme allied commander Europe, and General Klaus Naumann, chairman of the military committee at alliance headquarters, spelled out the consequences if Serb forces continued to mount attacks in Kosovo.

Alexander "Sandy" Verschueren, the US Ambassador to Nato, made it clear in public

that this could mean imminent airstrikes.

Speaking on the BBC's Today programme, he said that if Mr Milosevic adopted a totally defiant posture with the two generals, alliance governments would be forced to make a decision on action within a matter of days.

The situation is very urgent," he said. "Time is running out for Milosevic. He doesn't seem to understand how serious the situation is... I don't think our patience will extend for very long."

Sandy Berger, the US National Security Adviser, said in Washington that the threat of force was still "very much an option".

Before meeting Mr Milosevic, General Clark said that the military plans drawn up



last October for extensive airstrikes were still "very much alive". He told the BBC: "Most of the forces are poised and ready should they be called on today."

Thirteen Nato countries have combat aircraft deployed in Italy for possible airstrikes and remain on a high operational status.

The RAF has four Harrier GR7 ground attack aircraft at Gioia del Colle, one TriStar airborne refuelling tanker at Aviano and two Sentry early warning radar systems at Aviano.

For the planned airstrikes

campaign against Yugoslavia in October — averted at the last moment — a total of 500 aircraft were assigned for the raids, including six US B52s, sent to RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire.

At the Belgrade meeting,

the two Nato generals de-

manded that Mr Milosevic bring to justice those responsible for the massacre of 45 Albanians in the village of Racak in Kosovo, the incident which provoked the latest confrontation.

Generals Clark and Naumann also tried to persuade

six-nation Contact Group in Brussels, at which political directors from Russia, America and four European Nato allies will examine the bleak options facing those attempting to promote peace negotiations in Kosovo.

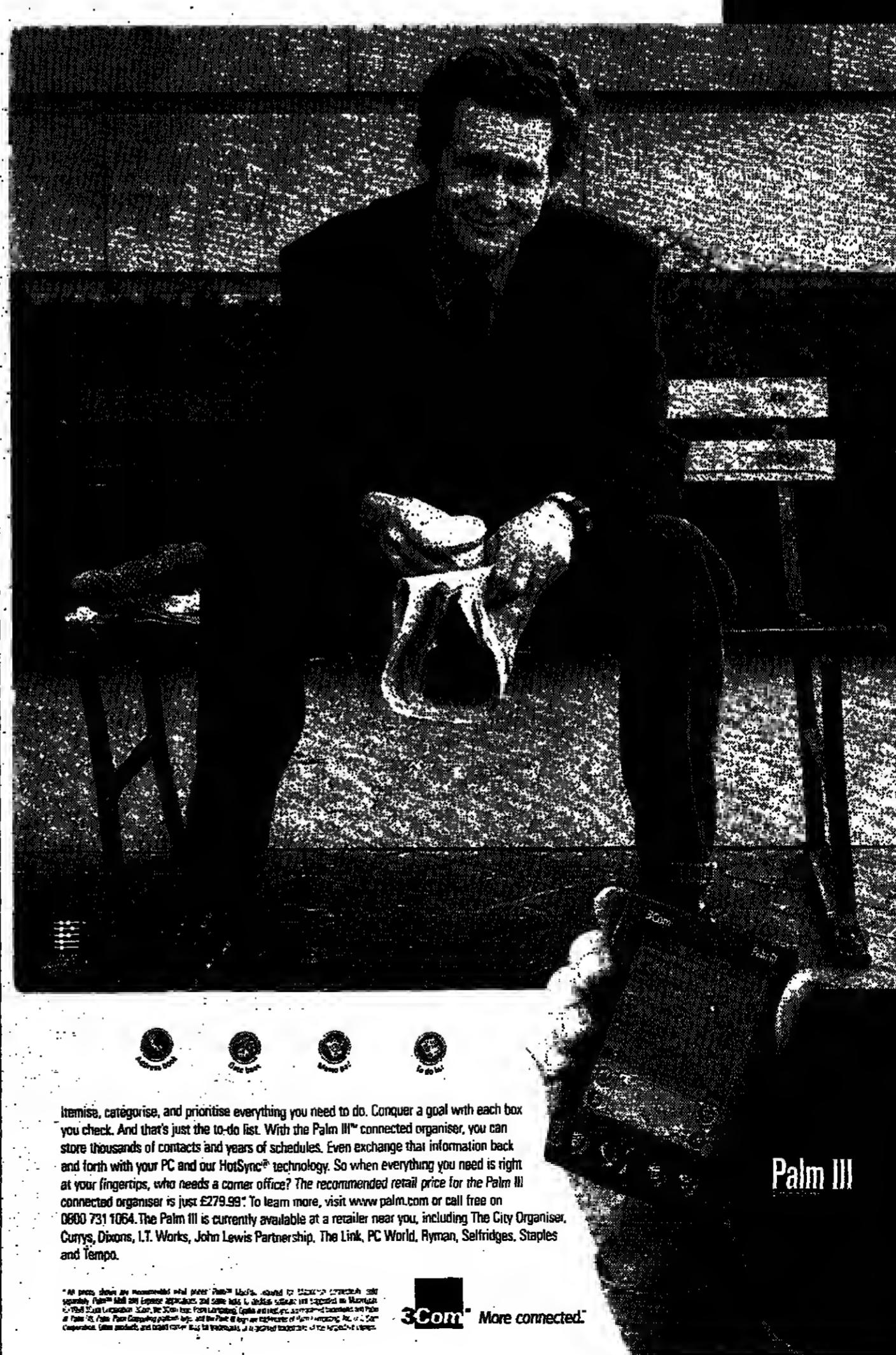
Moscow remains staunchly opposed to the use of force, and is expected to take as strong a line against Nato airstrikes as it did against the British and American attacks on Baghdad. Western diplomats were encouraged by Russia's recent condemnation of violence in Kosovo, but were pessimistic that this could be translated into gaining greater leverage over Belgrade.

Instead, today's meeting will focus on ways of breaking the diplomatic deadlock by intensifying the pressure on Belgrade in the United Nations, raising shuttle diplomacy to a higher level and proposing a Dayton-style conference of all the parties in a third country.

Diplomats admitted yesterday that there was little incentive for either Mr Milosevic or the Kosovo Liberation Army to begin meaningful talks. They hoped that the KLA could be persuaded to join negotiations, either by squeezing its supply of weapons from Albania or by speeding up elections in Kosovo for Albanian political representatives who could claim a mandate for talks. But the KLA is likely to deal harshly with any rival Albanian factions.

The brain-storming session of the Contact Group in Brussels will be followed by the two generals' reports. The Contact Group is still searching for a way to co-ordinate the various initiatives by Nato, political directors and the OSCE.

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Joy in the rain as Hussein returns home

By CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN AMMAN

JORDAN gave way to euphoria yesterday as King Hussein returned home from a six-month cancer cure to resume control of the desert kingdom he has ruled for 47 years.

Up to a million Jordanians lined the streets of the rain-soaked capital to greet the man known by diplomats as PLK (Plucky Little King) as he braved wintry weather to wave from the open top of a white Mercedes.

Some Jordanians, maintaining Beduin custom, slaughtered sheep and camels in the King's honour. Others sat in tents heated by smoky wood-burners and filled with patriotic bagpipe music. Loudspeakers lined a route lit with fairy-lights and festooned with giant portraits of the 63-year-old

monarch and his wife, Queen Noor. Shopkeepers offered trays of sweets and cardamom-laced coffee to passers-by.

Munir Abdul Samad, 42, an English teacher, pointed to a camel squatting on the back of a white pickup truck. "We have brought the animal 150 miles to kill it here to show His Majesty how much we have missed him like a father," he said.

The teacher, his head swathed in a red and white keffiyeh, added: "It is truly miraculous. For nearly a year we had no rain. Now, within hours of the King addressing us on Saturday night, it has rained almost non-stop. It shows even the heavens are determined to welcome him."

From the atmosphere along the 15-mile route of the royal motorcade, the country might

just have won the World Cup, or even a war. "I can tell you what you see is genuine, heartfelt feeling," Mr Samad said. "Without the King we were all frightened what might happen to our country."

Many were anxious to see how the King looked after six months of chemotherapy in the US for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Doctors have announced him cured after treatment which also included a transplant of his own bone marrow and blood transfusions from close relatives.

The King — the world's longest-serving executive ruler — piloted his own jet home. Somehow he appeared to have gained strength since being helped towards the plane in London by his American-born wife only hours earlier.

In a symbolic gesture that will have appealed even to his

just-won-the-World-Cup-or-even-a-war supporters, the King squatted on the back of a camel.

King Hussein, watched by Queen Noor, is embraced by his brother, Crown Prince Hassan, after arriving home in Amman yesterday

Islamic fundamentalist enemies, the King's first act was to kneel and pray towards Mecca on a red and black mat laid out on the sodden runway. Then he met Arab notables, including the President of Yemen,

en, the Emir of Qatar, the Crown Prince of Morocco and Bahrain, and Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

Throughout the day, Jordan Television relayed film of the King's reign, which began

when he was 17, not long after his grandfather, King Abdullah, was assassinated in front of him in Jerusalem.

Banners stretched in a forest across the wide boulevards of Amman proclaimed: "You re-

turn like the soul to the body."

The excitement was reinforced by the fact that 80 per cent of Jordanians have never known another ruler and have a rapport with the King.

"The simple fact is that we love the man and we admire him," said Naim Muleek, a Jordanian Christian of Palestinian origin. "We want to show you how happy we are he is well."

The King said yesterday that there was "much to be done". He has promised to introduce a series of reforms before he returns in two months to the Mayo clinic in Minnesota, for what is described as a routine check-up. The planned reforms include a rooting out of corruption.

He has also told close aides that he plans to convene a family council to deal with the future of the Hashemite dynas-

ty. There is speculation that he wants Prince Hamzah, his 18-year-old son, by Queen Noor, to succeed him, rather than his brother, Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal, Sh

his designated successor.

A palace official said: "His Majesty, a strong believer with a deep sense of faith in God's will, has confronted life and death during those difficult days (of his cure). It really rekindled a wish to seek posterity through passing the succession to one of his sons."

■ Tel Aviv: Two Israeli air-force F16 fighters provided an honorary escort for King Hussein as he piloted himself over Israeli air space. Israel's Defence Ministry said the planes met the King's plane 50 miles outside Israel's waters above the Mediterranean Sea. (AP)

Leading article, page 11

Travel agent denies Miss World rape

Ramallah: An Israeli travel agent has denied raping Linor Abargil, the 19-year-old Israeli model who is Miss World, saying: "I didn't do this dirty thing."

A court here yesterday ordered that Shlomo Nour, 43, be held until January 31 pending an Israeli police inquiry into the alleged rape outside Milan on October 6.

Mr Nour, who was arrested at Tel Aviv airport on his return home this month, said: "I came to Israel on my own initiative. I didn't do this dirty thing. I didn't do this disgusting thing, and I am an innocent man."

Ms Abargil, who won the Miss World crown in November, alleges that the Egyptian-born Israeli, who ran a travel agency in Milan, raped her at

knife-point in his car after offering to drive her to Rome for a flight home.

Mr Nour claims that they had consensual sex in his Milan apartment. (Reuters)

Nour claims Abargil consented to sex

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OF SECTION

Seeking clues to natural cures

Mexico's flora could be nature's storehouse for remedies to many diseases. Anjana Ahuja reports

With its thick jungle mountains, southern Mexico is one of nature's richest botanical gardens. The thousands of plants that flourish there — some grow nowhere else — have provided medicinal remedies for many centuries to the isolated Mayan people.

Now the Mayas are to let the world in on their secrets. Xenova, a British pharmaceutical company, together with scientists at the University of Georgia, are embarking on a project to document the flora in the politically troubled Mexican state of Chiapas.

Mayan doctors and healers will be interviewed to find out which plants they use to treat common ailments, such as tropical diseases.

The groundwork for the project has been laid over the past decade by a husband and wife team of anthropologists, Professor Brent Berlin and Dr Elois Ann Berlin, based at the University of Georgia. They have collected specimens of about 1,600 plants and recorded the ailments they supposedly cure. They also carried out health surveys on thousands of residents, as well as interviewing experts. The medical practices of the Mayas are so complex that the couple's findings about just one class of illness — gastrointestinal diseases — filled a 500-page book.



THE TIMES

SCIENTISTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

In the first of a new series of lectures starting on Wednesday January 27, Dr Martin Westwell, a young chemist from Oxford University, will describe the war against superbugs. As well as explaining how antibiotics work, he will discuss the frightening prospect that, for the first time in the history of medicine, we have no weapons with which to fight the most deadly infections.

The talk will be introduced by Professor Susan Greenfield, director of the Royal Institution. There will be the opportunity for questions from the audience.

The lecture will be held at 7.30pm at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BS.

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Passing on a natural asset: women in the State of Chiapas in Mexico gather to practise their traditional medicine

In 1997, realising the enormity of cataloguing other herbal remedies, Professor Berlin contacted Xenova, which is based in Slough, Berkshire. "It fitted in perfectly with what we do at Xenova Discovery," says Dr Neil Robinson, head of analytical chemistry at the research arm of the company.

"We are interested in developing drugs from natural products, especially micro-organisms in plants, and we have collected samples from all over the world. One of the most familiar drugs, aspirin, was originally derived from willow bark, so there is a long tradition of treatments coming from natural sources."

"We were particularly interested because Chiapas is a mecca of biodiversity — it has thousands of plant species that are rare and perhaps don't grow anywhere else, and harbour organisms not found anywhere else."

Last month the Xenova was awarded a grant of £300,000 a year for five years by a consortium of organisations, including the National Institutes of Health in Washington, to pursue the scheme.

The two collaborators are approaching the project from slightly different angles. Both hope that Western medicine can benefit from Mayan medical expertise honed over centuries. The Mayas have potions for such diverse conditions as

diarrhoea, fractures, burns and mental disorders. One plant is even used as a means of birth control. Fungi are also popular. Pharmacological studies have shown at least some of these treatments to be effective — coyote bush leaves, undocumented in modern medical literature, work wonders for diarrhoea, while a cactus balm can soothe burns.

Xenova is hoping to uncover plants that can treat more serious illnesses, such as cancer. The company has gambled successfully before: a compound found in exotic soils, known only as XRS9576, may have potential as an anti-cancer agent. For Professor Berlin, the project represents the chance to document traditions and practices that are in danger of disappearing, either be-

cause of the vanishing rainforest or because modern generations are turning to more orthodox medicine. "We want to convince the younger Mayas that it makes more sense to use the natural pharmacy in their backyard than spending good money on conventional medicine that does the same thing," Professor Berlin says.

There are estimated to be 9,000 plants of interest, each playing host to several micro-organisms. The most laborious and time-consuming aspect of the project will be the collection and identification of species, specially trained botanists from the area will aid the effort greatly. Back in the laboratory, thousands of specimens can be scrutinised in a day. Cells are brought into contact with

plant extracts to see if the concentrate has any effect. "If you get an effect, you have to find out what in the extract is causing it," Dr Robinson explains. "That means separating and purifying each compound in the extract."

The next step is to find out which bit of the cell is targeted by the compound. At this stage, chemists will create hundreds of analogues — substances with very similar molecular structures — and then test them. This helps to home in on the chunk of the molecule responsible.

Dr Robinson adds: "This tweaking might also help to produce a compound that has the same biological action but fewer side-effects, or might make the substance easier to formulate into a drug. For

example, if a compound can be tweaked so it will dissolve in water, one can administer it as a tablet rather than as an injection, which is easier."

Conscious of accusations of bioprospecting — exploiting the biological treasures of another country for profit — Xenova and Professor Berlin plan to set up a trust in Chiapas, called PROMAYA, that will represent the community and receive royalties from any drugs that Xenova develops.

"The pay-off will be considerable," Professor Berlin says. "We are not screening just any old plants. We are studying ones that have been used successfully by the Mayan people for generations. Whether we find a cure for AIDS or cancer is another question, but it's quite possible."

How the Mayas got high

The Mayas created one of the great civilisations in the unpossessing Central American jungle. Cities such as Tikal in Guatemala and Chichen Itza in Yucatan amazed early explorers with their massive temples, striking stone sculptures and long inscriptions in hieroglyphics.

Deciphering the dates on these monuments showed that the Mayas reached their peak between AD200 and 900 — roughly coincident with the Roman and early Byzantine Empires — before undergoing a mysterious collapse that left most of their cities abandoned to the forest. Over the past century, hundreds of these cities have been found in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize.

Tikal is estimated to have housed 70,000 people. The urban core of more than a square mile included broad plazas linked by processional ways, and six large temples. One of these, excavated in the 1960s, covered the tomb of a powerful ruler known as Rivas Kan Kawi, who died in AD734 after half a century fighting to preserve the independence of Tikal. Such real history is emerging rapidly from the decipherment of the hieroglyphics.

A popular drink was balche, a mead in which was steeped the bark of the balche tree. In one account, the jar was heated, and just before serving, a toad was dropped in. The balche was released by its poison glands acting as a hallucinogen.

Mayan pottery vessels show that such drugs were also administered as enemas bypassing the nausea caused by swallowing. Spanish sources after the 1542 conquest of Yucatan mention "lands planted with wine trees", as well as the drinking of Mayan plant lot.

In recent years, interest has revived not just from scholars seeking explanations for the abundant depictions of plants in ancient Mayan scriptures and murals, but from those who believe that there is modern knowledge to be gained. While searches such as Professor Berlin's may well give the world the basis for new drugs, local efforts such as the Panzi Medicine Trail or the La Milpa research station in Belize are trying to bring knowledge of plants and their uses back to visitors and the Mayas themselves.

NORMAN HAMMOND

A dousing for dowsters

DOWSING lies right at the ragged edge of science, a hinterland occupied by ideas whose time may be past but which simply refuse to die. There is no plausible mechanism to explain it, but belief persists, aided occasionally by scientific experiments which seem to show that the technique really works.

Among the most painstaking of these were carried out in the 1980s by physicists in Munich, who concluded that most dowlers did no better than chance, but that a few "showed an extraordinarily high rate of success, which can scarcely, if at all, be explained as due to chance".

Nonsense, says Professor Jim Enright of Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. He accuses Professor Betz of "wishful thinking" in his interpretation of the Munich experiments.

He says, provide no evidence that dowsing does work.

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Oliver's army is here today

Thomas Strathclyde on Blair's

Cromwellian Lords reforms

Today the Government will invite the British people to board a train to yet another unknown destination. It will publish a White Paper and a Bill designed to destroy the existing House of Lords and upset the balance between the two Houses of Parliament, without itself having, or declaring, any view of what the long-term powers, functions or composition of the Lords should be. It is hard to imagine anything more reckless or irresponsible.

This Bill is not a reform to regulations on the plucking of the tail feathers of pigeons. It affects the independence of the revising chamber in our Parliament. The Lords is where citizens and businesses are protected against bad law. It is — in the words of its sacked Labour Leader, Lord Richard — "effectively the only place in which the legislature can curb the power of the executive".

Change in Parliament should be effected only after careful cross-party consultation and full public consultation. Instead, in a typical display of arrogance, the Government will plunge on with scarcely a week's "consultation".

This House of Lords has not served the people badly. Indeed, on matters like the absurd beef-on-the-bone ban, the age of consent, the fair treatment of students at Scottish universities and the right of people to vote for a candidate of their choice by name at elections, I suspect the House is closer to the people's idea of what is sensible than the "people's Government".

It is bizarre that when Tony Blair is "re-launching" his Government ready to "deliver" on the schools and hospitals which are fast descending into chaos, his flagship priority is to spend a year on an ideological crusade against hereditary peers.

We would have chosen neither this priority, nor this Bill. But, as with Labour's other ill-thought-through constitutional changes, we have to deal with the situation as we find it. That is why — if they are proposed — we will back Lord Weatherill's amendments to keep 100 hereditary peers in the interim House. This is not a trade union pact to preserve hereditaries. We want to avoid the country being left indefinitely with a totally nominalised quango.

Heredity may seem outdated to modernisers. But it is part of our national tradition and every family's instinct. The fact that peers cannot be "descended" assures their independence. Something at least as independent should come in their place. I know of no wholly nominated legislature that has any moral authority or standing. Certainly, Lord Irvine of Laird and Baroness Jay of Paddington are no more "democratic" than I am.

No British politician since Cromwell has claimed the power Mr Blair now hopes to exercise — to determine the party balance and composition of a House of Parliament. The Prime Minister has become sensitive to this charge. He boasts that he will not exercise this huge growth of patronage to the full. He says he will subcontract the choice

The author is the Tory Leader in the House of Lords.

Bronwen Maddock's column will appear tomorrow.

'Let us not linger, for a very slightly familiar bald man in a floral pinny has come in to lay for lunch'

Reluctant as I am to offer further confirmation to those of you who feel I should get out more — throw myself into cribbage or Flamenco dancing, find a dog to walk, an instrument to master, a horse to hobby, anything rather than spend any more time woolgathering in my loft — I have to tell you (for it is my curse to do so) that in the summer of AD97,999 it will be possible to dig for winkles on Cricklewood beach.

I worked that out after only a hour or so this morning. It is not, of course, what I climbed up into the loft to do, what I planned to do in the loft was have a bit of a think about whether President Saddam Hussein might not in fact be Lord Lucan. They are, after all, identical and of an age, and it would explain much. But

while you may rest assured that I shall return to this theory at a later date, for the time being I prefer to nip forward 96,000 years to the time not yet being, so that I can not downstairs from this loft, knot a hankie about my head, and go for a paddle. Because hardly had I begun investigating the likeliest fugitive route, in 1974, from Belgravia to Baghdad than a wheeling seagull suddenly shrieked outside my window, not merely raising my head from my atlas but also reminding me of a letter to *The Times* a week before, from the Chief Scientist of English Nature. I do not of course mean that it was the seagull's intention to do this, it was just an ordinary shriek. I mean only that my memory was jogged in that marine nano-second to the re-

marks of Dr Keith Duff, who had written to say that the recent erosion of Beachy Head was a natural force, and we should think twice before shoring the coastline up with concrete, learning instead "to live with change rather than always seeking to prevent it".

What could a woolgatherer do at this recollection but slap shut his atlas and phone English Nature in Peterborough? And yes, though Dr Duff was not at his desk, I did eventually get through to a helpful chap who could answer my question. The answer is that our southern coastline is eroding at roughly a metre a year. So I thanked him,

opened the atlas again, took a ruler, and noted that the distance between Beachy Head and Cricklewood, as the seagull flies, is 96km. By AD97,999, therefore, this being my gate's height above sea-level, according to an equally helpful chap at the Ordnance Survey office. My house, in short, will be perched on the White Cliffs of Cricklewood, overlooking a charming little South Coast resort.

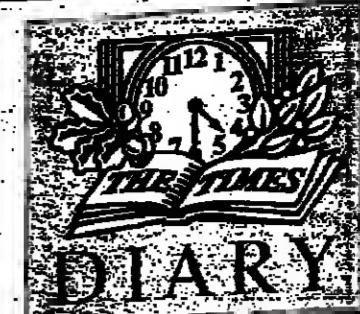
Let us come down from the loft now, very slowly, three millennia a step, and look about us. See, my dining room contains not one large table but four small ones,

each with a bottle of HP Sauce chained to it, and a jug of plastic cornflowers, and a cruel set engraved "Seaview Boarding House". The walls once hung with pictures now sport framed notices: "Please Do Not Take Towels To Beach And Oblige" and "After Meals Ensure Your Serviette Is Replaced In Ring Provided". Let us, though, not linger, for a very slightly familiar bald man in a floral pinny has just come in to lay for lunch, and it is time for us to pop outside.

Oh, look, a fine summer morning, the sea-mist lifting to reveal Hendon Pier and the Edgware Lighthouse bobbing beyond, and the cheery strains of *William Tell* wafting up from the bandstand below, a gilded gem of that fine broad

promenade which stretches all the way from Golders' Cove to Wembley Bay. Focus the big brass telescope standing on Seaview's fetchingly gnomed front lawn, and what do we see? We see beach huts, and wheel-sills, and ice-cream carts, and striped wooden deckchairs, we see little ones cross-legged on the sand, shooting at Punch and Judy, and large ones wrapped in towels struggling to remove their trousers, we see pedalo and donkeys and a motor-boat rocking lazily beside a blackboard offering trips to Finchley Island...

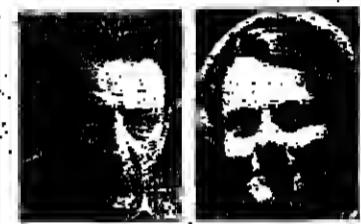
How reassuring it all is! How right Dr Duff was to urge us to live with change, for nothing really changes. Even though, as we step away from the telescope, a tiny piece of cliff beyond our feet breaks off, and falls.



Freud slip

A GUILTY conscience? Lord Goodman — alleged to have siphoned £10 million from Viscount Portman — left a valuable Lucian Freud etching of himself to Christopher Portman, the aggrieved viscount's heir. The vivid scribbling, one of four used by Freud towards a drawing for the National Portrait Gallery, was donated secretly to Portman, to the surprise of friends. Lady Avon — Anthony Eden's widow who nursed Goodman to the end — admired the works and all assumed that she would inherit one. Instead, Lady A (pictured below with the artist) received 40 volumes of Trollope, poor dear.

"Christopher realises how valuable it is," Lady Portman assures me from Antigua. "Why didn't the old rogue leave it to the viscount?" Oh, I don't think he wanted it." Wise, inheritance tax being higher even than lawyers' bills.



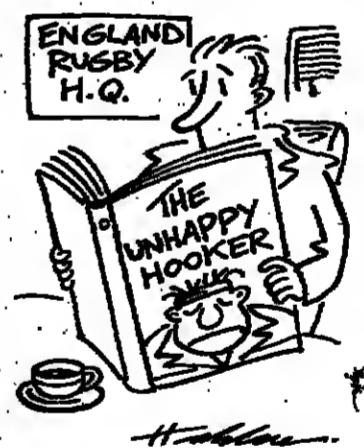
• THIS demise of Amanda Platell recalls a recent Spectator lunch when the Express on Sunday Editor fell into conversation with Charlie Whelan about Max Hastings, amiable Editor of the Evening Standard. Max could not last long, they concurred. Perhaps: but rather longer than both of them.

Cover up

LAP DANCING is hitting Hampstead. And the suburb's PC residents have begun a campaign to remove the joint. Secrets is just yards' from South Hampstead High School. Peggy Jay, President of the Heath and Hampstead Society, is rallying her fully clad troops: "I have lived here for 36 years and it is not what we expect."

John Humphrys, the grand inquisitor, wishes them well, after protesting against Secrets' other club near his Hammersmith bachelor pad. "I am very annoyed about it. I wrote a tough piece excoriating them, but they cut out some phrases, and turned them into approval," he said. "We had some success in court though. At least we got the judge to make the girls keep their knickers on." For that, I am sure all residents will be grateful.

• OFF to France to bag honorary degrees: the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hume — and Lord St John of Fawsley. "In the party's nonconformist conscience."



Dance flaw

THE Oxford Union is in a spin. The Austrian Ambassador is coming to its ball. Problem: Union President, Theo Mills, cannot dance; and as the ambassador is a Dr Eva Nowotny, Mills should lead her in the waltz.

Enter the Rev David Johnson who, with a stray count, is teaching the pup. "It is like Stepfie trying to teach his father," wails Johnson.

• PETER MANDELSON is chums with his fellow bachelors, Sir Edward Heath, says Anthony Barnett in Prospect: "Both single. Both meritocratic products of suburbs. Both able and obsessive. Each arrogant, lacking popular touch." Poor Peter, an insult too far.

Gay abandon

PLATO should be cited in sex education, says Roger Scruton. Greek love, then? Nope. "The distinction between natural and perverted desire plays no part in current education." Plato's teaching, that gays should sublimate their desires, is crucial: "That is what Plato perceived, in his celebrations of the love that bears his name." Can't see it catching on.

JASPER GERARD



HAGUE'S IDENTITY

Strong themes will achieve little without policy detail

Only a brave politician is willing to explore issues of identity and what it means to be British. As William Hague conceded last night, there used to be something very un-British about trying to define who the British are. The consequence of that embarrassed silence has been that a few, mostly academic, observers have been able to portray the United Kingdom as an artificial creation built from opposition to Frenchmen and Catholics and lacking any form of coherent cultural core. It was partly that charge that the Conservative leader sought in a well-crafted and eloquent address, to confront:

Mr Hague's willingness to undertake this task is welcome and his arguments are persuasive. A country that is about to undertake an era of intense constitutional change needs to have some sense of itself before deciding what sorts of institutions it seeks to abolish, change or create. The force of Mr Hague's text was also appear an effective rebuke to those within his party who would abandon Scotland outright and seek to expand and exploit an emerging sense of English nationalism. The dangerous flirtation of the Shadow Cabinet with an English Parliament is at last an end.

The Tory leader sought to draw distinctions between Britain's democratic traditions and those that pervade continental Europe. He did so not in a tone of splendid isolation or arrogant superiority, but as a matter of simple fact. It is indeed the case that, as Mr Hague asserted, "where we invest our national identity in our political institutions, many other European countries have been let down by their political institutions within living memory". For that reason the constitutional implications of close integration within the European Union are more profound and more destabilising for Britain than for almost all of our neighbours.

This was also, however, a coded speech about the Conservative Party as well as the wider country. Mr Hague emphasised the

need for Conservatives to accept Britain in its modern form, rather than wallow knee-deep in nostalgia. He acknowledged that his party had created the impression that it was "obsessed with economics" and implied that in future it would seek to fight on other fields, notably cultural and social values. He pointed in broad terms to the policy review ahead.

That examination should, in truth, have started already. The public still has little idea about what parts of the Tory past Mr Hague is willing to repudiate, still less what new ideas might be adopted. The Conservative Party listens to Mr Hague's message of change and inclusiveness and applauds politely. There is not much evidence that it is willing to undertake reform on anything like the scale that its leader rightly recognises must be done.

As a result, the Tory thinking appears to be on hold as Mr Hague awaits some movement in the polls that will in turn allow him more space for manoeuvre. Able spokesmen such as Ann Widdecombe and David Willetts have been put in high-profile posts but with precious little new that they are permitted to articulate.

There is a twofold danger in this strategy. Either the voters will not return to the fold without a clearer signal that the Conservatives have repented, or any small upward shift in public opinion will be seized upon by some in the parliamentary party as an alibi to postpone fundamental change once again.

Britain may not suffer from an identity crisis but the condition of the Conservative Party is far less certain. It continues to be seen by a stark majority of voters, representing the last discredited administration, not the official Opposition, and certainly not an alternative Government. Three years ago, when John Major invited a challenge to his leadership, his opponents responded with the prophetic slogan "no change, no chance". Those words are equally relevant to Tory policy today.

RETURN OF THE KING

As Jordan celebrates, it speculates

They danced in the streets, sang and cheered. The airport was filled with flags, bagpipes and banners and a million people lined the narrow streets of Amman to welcome their King. In all his 47 years on the throne, King Hussein of Jordan has never known a homecoming like this.

Returning after six months abroad, intensive cancer treatment and a taxing negotiating session to clinch the Wye accords, the King could scarcely contain his emotion. He is the world's longest-serving executive ruler in one of the world's most turbulent regions. Jordan is a country largely fashioned, held together and given patriotic substance by its monarch. The relationship has not always been easy. King Hussein has survived numerous assassination attempts, coup plots, uprisings and attacks by his neighbours.

He has been isolated in his support for the West, reviled by opponents of the Hashemite dynasty and denounced by Arab nationalists. He has seen his advisers murdered, had to give up claim to the West Bank and lost administrative control of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Yet he has brought a stability and prosperity to a country that has provided an oasis of moderation in a harsh desert of hatred. Jordanians know that they have been better ruled than any of their Arab neighbours. A quarter of the population filled the streets to give him a rousing welcome. No drummed-up applause by vain dictators has matched anything like it.

Yet there was a poignancy to his return. The King has been proclaimed cured. He

FARMING FASHIONS

Diversity is agriculture's best option

Yesterday the Commons Agricultural Select Committee published a report on rural development. Agriculture, it recognises, is no longer the mainstay of rural society. Only through diversification will farmers find the means to survive. Some four fifths of Britain is currently farmed. The agricultural industry constitutes an important resource of land, capital and local knowledge. But it still remains largely untapped.

Farmers are notoriously sceptical of change. Long after hundreds of Londoners have made a scrum through the organic stalls of Spitalfields market part of their weekend shopping routine, the leader column of *Farmers Weekly*, belatedly announces in the current issue, that "organic systems have come of age". The staid publication, in large part financed by the advertising of agrochemical industries, reflects a significant shift in farmers' attitudes as it condones organic "muck and magic" as a "serious profit-generating operation". Battered by the beef ban, Asian market collapse and an over-strong pound, even the most traditional British farmers are looking to new initiatives as they struggle to save their businesses from bankruptcy.

Many are diversifying their stock and crop mixes. Deer, ostriches and alpacas are raised on land where cattle and sheep once grazed. Lupins and linseed are grown alongside cereals. High quality, locally

labelled food finds a specialist but growing market, and farm retail shops and kitchen restaurants are opening all over the country. Other farmers are catering for the tourist trade as barn conversions and caravan sites provide accommodation. Pet corners attract children. Miller mazes and rural cemeteries make more unusual options.

But diversification is not an instant panacea. Farmers hold one of the nation's most precious commodities in their safe-keeping, the landscape. Fields planted with plastic cloches may shield rows of delicate lettuces from harsh Welsh winds, but they despoil valley views. Off-track driving may bring extra income, but it destroys rural peace. The countryside is not a playground.

Farmers are the stewards of moors and mountains, fields and fens. But this stewardship comes at a price. While many wait for the European Union to come to its senses with a system of CAP reform that will not just benefit big producers, the British Government must help to tide low-intensity farmers over difficult times.

The subsidies it offers must be far more specifically targeted — not simply directed at the end product. They must be meted out in such a way that they help to protect the lifestyles of those such as hill farmers whose traditional agricultural practices preserve the beauty of the British landscape as we know it now.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Peanington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Hume's relationship with Carey

From Mr Martin Pendergast

The Children's Society

Sir, The Government's announcement that it intends to send in the riot police to control children at the Medway Secure Training Centre in Kent shows, as your report of January 14 rightly points out, how illusory the progressive dreams of the secure training centres (STCs) have proved. In fact, the centre should never have been built.

If those of us who work with disturbed and damaged children are going to make a difference to these children's lives we need to provide small units where children will respond to individual attention. Put a large group of damaged and disturbed children together and you have a tinderbox. Bad behaviour inevitably breeds worse behaviour.

The Children's Society made these views clear when the centres were first announced under the previous Government, as did magistrates, other children's charities and penal reform groups. In opposition, a member of the current Government described them as "colleges of crime". Despite these warnings, the Government not only opened Medway STC, it is planning several similar centres.

This Government has talked a great deal about individual responsibility. To provide an unsuitable service to these disturbed children and then to threaten to send in the riot police is an abrogation of its own responsibility. It is iniquitous for this Government to turn round and blame disturbed children who have been left in an institution that is known to be failing them.

The only solution to this problem is to close down the secure training centres in favour of small units which can respond to these damaged children as individuals.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER SMITH,
Social Policy Manager,
The Children's Society,
Edward Rudolf House,
Margery Street, WC1X 0JL
January 14

baby, in a way which was "potentially embarrassing".

This, insofar as it refers to me, is untrue. I have never interviewed the cardinal. I am informed that he was astonished, as was I, to read this story.

The author, Mr Neil Balfour, has apologised to me for his mistake. He appears to have confused my name with that of some other interviewer. Whoever did the objectionable interview, it was definitely not me.

Yours truly,
ROBIN DAY,
Garrick Club, WC2E 9AY.
January 15

From Mr Richard Willmott

Sir, How unfortunate it is that Ann Widdecombe cannot emulate her hero and let her contempt for the Archbishop of Canterbury never be "publicly discernible".

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD WILLMOTT
(Headmaster),
The Dixie Grammar School,
Market Bosworth,
Leicestershire CV13 0LE.
January 14

The Jacqueline we remember

From Mr Julian Lloyd Webber and others

Sir, *Hilary and Jackie*, a film purporting to chronicle the life of cellist Jacqueline du Pré and based on a book by her brother and sister, is to be released this week. It concentrates heavily on an affair which Jacqueline had with her sister's husband and portrays her as selfish, spoilt and manipulative.

This is not the Jacqueline du Pré that we, as her friends and colleagues, knew.

Jacqueline possessed a wonderful joy in making music and a unique ability to bring that joy to her audience. This is the Jacqueline du Pré that we remember.

Yours,
JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER,
YEHUDI MENUHIN,
ITZHAK PERLMAN,
WILLIAMPLETH,
M. ROSTROPOVICH,
P. ZUKERMAN,
c/o IMG Artists,
Media House,
3 Burlington Lane, W4 2TH.
January 18

Legal basis for 'presumed consent' of organ donors

From Professor Margaret Estri and others

Sir, There is another aspect to the question of donors' "presumed consent" (letters, January 13). This concerns the use of tissue for research rather than for transplantation.

We are engaged in research that aims to increase understanding of schizophrenia by studying brain tissue from sufferers after death (and tissue from healthy persons unaffected by this devastating disease, for comparative purposes). This is extremely difficult to acquire, largely because permission is needed from next-of-kin at a time when they are likely to be distressed by their recent bereavement.

Some doctors and nurses understandably hesitate to ask for this permission for fear of increasing distress or because they are unaware of the need for such tissue.

If there was legislation that enabled tissue to be made available for medical research as long as no objection

Owners' rights

From Mr Neil Howlett

Sir, As dozens of vulnerable women and children flee Racal (letter, January 19), Kosovar children — both Albanian and Serb — are again caught in the crossfire. They are at risk not only from mortars, but from silent killers like pneumonia, typhoid, hepatitis, and the highest incidence of polio in Europe.

Visiting Kosovo, even during the ceasefire, I found severely traumatised children. They were untypically quiet, too scared to play, and racked with bronchitis and acute respiratory diseases. The fragile girls enabled the launch of an immunisation campaign, restocking of health centres and restarting of education.

Yet, last week, even before the Racal killing, our field workers were repeatedly prevented from reaching outlying areas. Now we fear that the explosive political climate will trigger greater uncertainty and deprivation for children. It is hoped that the politicians negotiating peace and aid for Kosovo will put the needs of children — for shelter, medicines, education and safety — first.

Yours sincerely,

NEIL HOWLETT.

Harris and Harris (solicitors),
11 Stoney Street,
Frome, Somerset BA11 1BU.
January 14

Advance intelligence

From Mr Robert Vincent

Sir, The news that their Government has ordered Chinese airline bosses to fly on New Year's Day in order to calm passengers' trepidation about the millennium bug (report, January 16) must surely be welcomed in Europe.

China's midnight comes some seven or eight hours before ours; so if their millennium bug causes anything to go wrong we'll be sure to hear of it pretty quickly, and consequently have plenty of time to land safely ourselves.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT VINCENT.
Dilly House, Wildern,
Andover, Hampshire SP11 0JF.
January 16

Wigs for judges

From Mr Andrew Mier

Sir, In claiming that wigs make judges appear out of touch with the country inhabited by the litigants (report, January 12), Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor of the Supreme Court, is presumably referring to civil litigation.

In criminal cases, where the defendants have a choice, most who contest the charges elect trial before a Crown Court judge who wears a wig, rather than before magistrates who do not.

Perhaps the lesson is that litigants are more concerned about the perceived quality of justice in the courts than in fashionable ideas about dressing to be in touch with the world.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW MIER,
Gray's Inn Chambers,
Gray's Inn, WC1R 5JR.
January 12

Letters may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

From His Honour Anthony Tibber

Sir, I have just retired from the circuit bench. For many years I wore a wig when entering court (that was my concession to convention) but removed it in the early stages of the day headed. Some counsel glared and kept their wigs on, others, with a sigh of relief, took them off.

I know of no power and no authority which can tell a judge that he or she must wear a wig. If those judges who wish to get rid of the wig simply cease to wear them, most of the remaining judges would probably follow suit.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY TIBBER,
22 Holmwood Gardens, N3 3NS.
January 12

Drink-drive limit

From Mr Peter McKellican

Sir, Last April I was banned from driving for a year. I had been 50 per cent over the limit — not roaring drunk, but I know the law and it was a "fair cop".

I travel widely in Europe, and I endorse your sentiments (leading article, "Know your limit", January 8) that, far from following any perceived lead from Europe by lowering our limit, we should seek to persuade our European partners to adopt some of our policies. Every time I explain my predicament to European business partners, be they French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian or German, they are astonished by our 12-month minimum ban.

I am sure that the success of drink-driving campaigns in Britain is largely due to the quite correct severity of the punishment. Our hard-hitting television campaigns are non-existent in France. Their limit may well be lower than ours, but if anyone were arrested and found to be slightly over it, they would in reality face a maximum ban of three months.

As a nation, our attitude to drinking and driving has changed for the better. Long may this continue. The attitude in much of mainland Europe has not and, until they follow our lead, will not.

Yours faithfully,

PETER MCKELLICAN,
105 Knighton Church Road,
Leicester LE2 3JN.

Something to chew on

From Dr R. J. S. Chinn

Sir, "I bet my ear to a bag of sweets," says Mr Mike Burton, former England prop forward (report, January 19), that the dispute between the Rugby Football Union and the Five Nations Committee will be short-lived.

Given the state of most prop forwards' ears, I know for one would rather have the bag of sweets.

Yours faithfully,

ROGER CHINN,
86 Beryl Road, W6 8JU.
r.chinn@btconnect.com

January 19

Problem shelved

From Major-General I. S. Harrison, Royal Marines (ret'd)

Sir, Mr R. J. Slade (letter, January 18) reports finding Worcester sauce in a supermarket food section headed "Mexico".

In my post-retirement capacity as Director General of the British Food Export Council, I visited a supermarket in southern Italy, where I found Birds Custard on shelves reserved for petfoods.

Yours sincerely,

I. S. HARRISON,
Manor Cottage, Runcorn,
Chichester, West Sussex PO20 6PU.
January 18

OBITUARIES



Grotowski envisaged a "poor" theatre, free of trappings

JERZY GROTOWSKI

Jerzy Grotowski, Polish theatre director, died of leukaemia in Pontedera, Tuscany, on January 14 aged 65. He was born in Rzeszow on August 11, 1933.

Through his revolutionary *Theatre Laboratorium*, which he founded in Opole in the end of the 1950s and later moved to Wrocław, Jerzy Grotowski sought in a way more radical than any theorist since Stanislawski, to make the role of the actor paramount in the theatre. The concept and work (he "disguised" the notion of "production") of the laboratory was essentially a revolt against what he saw as the decadent luxury of contemporary (especially contemporary Western) theatre, with its all-powerful directors, its lavish settings and its complicated — and needlessly expensive — lighting plots.

To Grotowski the psychological — indeed psychophysical — dimension of a performance was all-important. He envisaged a "poor" theatre, emancipated from all theatrical machinery and relying on the brain of the actor — though not necessarily his voice. Thus, in many a Grotowski staging mime, gestures and other body movements from the actors became more important than words. This tended to change the whole

relationship between actors and their audience who — and especially when Grotowski's productions were first seen in an unimpressive Britain — felt themselves being drawn, with seemingly irresistible force, into what was happening on the stage area.

The effects — and they were undeniably powerful — of such manipulation of the emotions of the audience tended, as time went on, to induce a certain arrogance in Grotowski. He came to feel that he had, at a stroke, made the standard classics of European drama irrelevant. Eventually he retreated into himself, giving up production for pure theory and moving away from the Poland which had nurtured him to settle first in France and America, where he had a ready audience for his increasingly tiresome sermons, and then finally in Italy, where he cloaked himself in a guru-like persona.

Yet he and his laboratory made an ineradicable impression on the art (and as he would have seen it, the science) of acting. He made it visceral as well as emotional. Sometimes an audience might literally flinch at the psychological and physical violence of the events being enacted only feet away from them. Such a seasoned experimental director as Peter Brook acknowledged Grotowski's profound influence on his work.

Born in the small town of Rzeszow, Jerzy Grotowski was educated at the Higher State School of Drama in Cracow, where he graduated as an actor in 1955. He then went to study at the Moscow State Institute of Theatre Arts, after which he returned to Poland to become director of a small theatre at Opole, where from 1959 he was putting into practice his theories of acting.

It was there that he established his experimental laboratory for theatre research, which he moved to Wrocław in 1965. This soon developed an international reputation for its revolutionary stagings. *Akropolis* (1962), a version of Stanisław Wyspiański's 19th-century Polish classic totally reworked by Grotowski, put classical myth to the test of modern experience, by casting the action in a Nazi death camp. As such it asked how the classical ideal of human dignity can withstand the 20th century's experience of man's capacity to degrade others — and by implication himself. When it was first seen in Britain, at the Edinburgh Festival of 1968, *Akropolis* was universally acknowledged to possess an awesome beauty, which held its audience in silent thrall in spite of the shocking nature of its visual images and the gashly moral dilemmas posed by its dramatic situations.

Under Grotowski's direction, *Akropolis* did not stand still, but went through several more versions between 1962 and 1975. Other notable productions from Grotowski's Wrocław laboratory in the 1960s were *El Principe constante*, a reworking by Stachowski of Calderón's play, slicing away most of the plot, about a captured Portuguese Prince who refuses to be ransomed by the Moors, to leave a characteristically Grotowskian concentration on the nature of martyrdom.

Apocalipsis cum figuris used an eclectic assemblage of texts drawn from such sources as the Bible, Dostoevsky and Simone Weil. Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Dr Faustus* also came in for the Grotowski treatment, a development from ideas he had already explored in a treatment of Goethe's *Faust*.

In Poland under a Communist regime to which Socialism was the cultural norm (and Catholicism was scarcely more tolerant of radical innovation), Grotowski was at first seen as the leader of some refractory heretical sect. Yet there was no question of proscription by the authorities. When the *Theatre Laboratorium* moved from Opole to Wrocław in 1965 the spacious quarters of the old *Rathaus* (before the frontier adjustments of 1945 Wrocław

had been Breslau, the capital of German Silesia) were placed at his disposal.

Grotowski's group went outside Poland for the first time in 1966 to tour the Scandinavian countries where it made an impact that had the directors of the rest of Western Europe allog to see its products. Over the next few years, with visits to the *Théâtre des Nations* in Paris, to Holland, Belgium, Italy, Yugoslavia, Mexico, Iran and the Lebanon, besides Britain, its reputation increased and the name of Grotowski became synonymous with an entirely new method of translating dramatic meaning into stage reality.

He set out his theories in his book *Towards a Poor Theatre*, published in English in 1968, with a foreword by Peter Brook. Although Grotowski remained professionally attached to Wrocław he worked abroad, notably with the Royal Shakespeare Company and at the French Higher Academy of Dramatic Arts at Aix-en-Provence. The *Theatre Laboratorium* was finally wound up in 1983 with Grotowski going to live at first in France, though he also had long periods in America, spent largely at the University of California at Irvine. More recently he had settled in Italy at Pontedera, near Pisa, where he was made an honorary citizen.

SIR FRANCIS McLEAN

Sir Francis McLean, CBE, Director of Engineering at the BBC, 1963-68, died on December 19 aged 94. He was born on November 6, 1904.

FRANCIS MCLEAN was at the cutting edge of broadcasting technology throughout a career which spanned three decades at the BBC. The expansion of its overseas services, the introduction of FM radio and the development of colour television were among the numerous advances on which he worked.

As deputy director of engineering and then director he was deeply involved in the debate over which colour system to adopt — eventually opting for the German PAL solution — as opposed to France's SECAM or the American NTSC.

He then oversaw the BBC's development of a converter, which enabled the exchange of colour programmes, despite the different systems in various countries. It proved its worth in 1968 — the year in which McLean retired — when colour pictures from the Olympic Games in Mexico were beamed into homes across the world.

Born Francis Charles McLean in Birmingham, he took a first in electrical engineering at Birmingham University before going to work in private industry. "Mac" as his close colleagues knew him, designed high-power radio transmitters for Western Electric in this country before moving in 1928 to work for Standard Telephones and Cables in Paris. From there he travelled extensively throughout Europe, designing high-power radio and telephone equipment for use not only in France but in such countries as Switzerland, Italy, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

After joining the BBC in 1937, he headed the corporation's transmitter design team. Then, when the Second World War broke out, he was involved in producing mobile equipment for war correspondents as well as in the urgent expansion of its monitoring stations and short-wave services.

In 1943, however, he was seconded to the Psychological Warfare Division of Supreme Headquarters' Allied Expeditionary Forces as chief engineer. He wore the uniform of a British army officer and emerged as the best pistol shot in his detachment during training.

He was involved in the preparations for D-Day, crossing the Channel in the summer of 1944 and in August was the first BBC man to enter Paris — even before its war



McLean involved in the debate on a colour system for TV

correspondents. He restarted French radio transmitters in the wake of the retreating Germans and went on to resurrect Radio Luxembourg after the Duchy had been liberated by the Americans. He had to replace all the

correspondents. He restarted French radio transmitters in the wake of the retreating Germans and went on to resurrect Radio Luxembourg after the Duchy had been liberated by the Americans. He had to replace all the

values in the Luxembourg transmitter — the Germans having shot the old ones to pieces.

He then accomplished a still bigger task. American agents wanted to use the station to beam "black" propaganda at the Germans, while he and his professional colleagues feared this might ruin the credibility of their own straightforward news bulletins. McLean cunningly managed to satisfy both sides, by arranging for different wavelengths to be used, the propaganda going out at night and the straight news by day. Meanwhile, he moved on to perform similar rescue missions at German radio centres during the closing stages of the war. He was appointed MBE for his war work in 1945.

On his return to the BBC, he was posted to Singapore, then as an adviser to the new Radio Pakistan. He also represented the BBC at an increasing number of international conferences on developments in broadcasting technology, and lectured in this country and abroad.

He became deputy chief engineer in 1952, deputy director of engineering in 1960 and finally the director in 1963. He had been advanced to CBE in 1953 and was knighted in 1967 for services to broadcasting.

After retiring from the BBC McLean was made technical director of a company developing video technology. He also became a director and adviser to Odey Developments, making specialised electronic components. He chaired the British Standards Institution Telecommunications Industry Standards Committee between 1960 and 1977 and in 1974 headed a Royal Commission on FM broadcasting in Australia.

He settled in Newbury, Berkshire, where he was elected president of the Newbury District Field Club. He also invested in a small flock of sheep, partly as a hobby and partly as a way of keeping the grass down.

Subordinates found McLean an exacting taskmaster who knew how he wanted things done. But he listened to those who disagreed with him and was known for his fairness and loyalty to old colleagues. His strengths included an unusual flair for picking up languages, discovered during his early years on the Continent. He spoke "conference level" French and German, had a working knowledge of Italian, Hungarian and Czech and could get by in Spanish and Russian.

He married his wife Dorothy in 1930. She survives him, together with a son and daughter.

SIR THOMAS SCRIVENOR

Sir Thomas Scrivenor, CMG, Colonial Office official, died on December 20 aged 90. He was born on August 28, 1908.

IN A world in which Great Britain still exercised dominion over palm and pine, Tom Scrivenor joined the Colonial Service straight from Oxford in 1930. His career was spent in the Middle East and Africa, and covered a period of turbulent change in these areas. In 1953 he was appointed Deputy High Commissioner for the three South African Protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. In Bechuanaland (now Botswana) he was able to secure the return of Seretse Khama and his wife Ruth.

The Khamas were the traditional chiefs of the largest tribe in Bechuanaland. While a student in Britain, in 1948, Seretse had married an English girl, Ruth Williams. His uncle, Tshekedi, who was acting as regent, and many others of the chiefs, objected.

Even the British Labour Government had reservations about a mixed marriage, which they felt might incite opinion in South Africa and neighbouring Rhodesia. Seretse remained in exile.

By 1956 majority opinion in the tribal area had changed and favoured a return by Seretse, mainly because people were afraid that Tshekedi, who was unpopular, might become the permanent chief.

Scrivenor was successful in negotiating the return of Seretse, mainly because people were afraid that Tshekedi, who was unpopular, might become the permanent chief.

He returned to Palestine in 1946 and was there until the end of the Mandate. In 1948 he was sent to Nigeria as Civil Service Commissioner to undertake the reorganisation of the Nigerian Civil Service.

He was transferred to Haifa and then Jaffa. In 1943 he was appointed Assistant Lieutenant-Governor in Malaya and served there for the remainder of the war.

He returned to Palestine in 1946 and was there until the end of the Mandate. In 1948 he was sent to Nigeria as Civil Service Commissioner to undertake the reorganisation of the Nigerian Civil Service.

In 1953 Scrivenor became an assistant district officer in Tanganyika, and in the same year married Elizabeth in Dar es Salaam. For three years they lived the semi-nomadic life of a district officer, spending many months on tour, living under canvas. In 1957 he was transferred to Palestine, where he served in Haifa and then Jaffa. In 1943 he was appointed Assistant Lieutenant-Governor in Malaya and served there for the remainder of the war.

Tom Scrivenor retired from the Colonial Service in 1961 and became secretary and chief executive of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau — described by the Duke of Edinburgh as "probably the best of the functioning organisations of the British Commonwealth".

The "troika" of territories was quite unlike any other British colonial problem, and there were few parallel experiences to draw on. By the time independence was achieved in 1963, each had a sound economy and government. They have remained among the most stable and prosperous countries of post-independence Africa.

Tom Scrivenor retired from the Colonial Service in 1961 and became secretary and chief executive of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau — described by the Duke of Edinburgh as "probably the best of the functioning organisations of the British Commonwealth".

He threw himself into his new career with enthusiasm and energy. He learnt quickly and effectively at a time when revolutionary changes were taking place in the methodology of information transfer. He steered through the mechanisation of information and data services, and he played a major role in creating the Food Information Service. He also had a part in creating AGRIS, the world agricultural information service.

Tom Scrivenor retired to Minster Lovell in Oxfordshire in 1972, where he was active locally. He was a committed Christian and read widely. His hobbies were polo, bridge, choral singing and fly-fishing.

He is survived by his wife Elizabeth and by his son and three daughters.

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SKI VACATION

Skier's Choice

SAS may stage Kosovo rescue

■ A substantial force of SAS troops is on alert to mount a "high risk" rescue operation in Kosovo if any international monitors in the Yugoslav province are taken hostage. The decision to enlist the SAS for hostage-rescue came after Brigadier-General Marcel Valentin, the French commander of Nato's extraction force based in Macedonia, said his 2,300 soldiers would be incapable of carrying out such an operation. Pages 1, 13

Aitken admits perjury

■ Jonathan Aitken, the former Conservative Cabinet minister, faced the threat of a lengthy prison sentence after admitting at the Central Criminal Court charges of perjury and perverting the course of justice. He confessed to drawing up a false witness statement which he persuaded his teenage daughter to sign to support his lies during a libel action. Pages 1, 4

Secret weapon

Ally McBeal has been dubbed President Clinton's secret weapon: an attractive, high-powered lawyer. Page 1

People's peers

The public is to be given the power to nominate "people's peers" under proposals to scrap the rights of hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords. Page 1

Pinochet case

The law lords confirmed that they are to seek clarification from Robin Cook over the date on which General Pinochet was recognised as head of state, in what could be a key piece of evidence. Page 2

Chat show shock

A woman who watched the Richard and Judy chat show recognised the guest as a removal man who had driven off with £60,000 worth of her possessions, a court was told. Page 3

Prisoner freed

A man serving 14 years in prison for armed robbery was freed by the Court of Appeal as a result of criminal charges brought against Scotland Yard detectives. Page 5

New Conservatives

William Hague promised to remodel the Conservatives as a modern alternative to new Labour that would avoid harking back to past glories. Page 6

Sweet-smelling 'new lads'

British men are learning to love the bathroom and are reaching for the moisturiser as never before, a survey of consumer trends shows. Despite his scruffy image, the lager-swilling, loaded-reading "new lad" is largely responsible for the trend. Sales of male moisturisers, exfoliants and other products have doubled since 1988 and topped £800 million last year. Page 8

Film favourites

Lord Attenborough is asking everyone in Britain to pick their three favourite films. His own are *The Gold Rush*, *On The Waterfront* and *Schindler's List*. Page 7

Fashion statement

City analysts were among guests at a fashion show as Marks & Spencer sought to revive its fortunes with a spring and summer collection. Page 9

Gallant gelding

A horse that was executed by a Nazi firing squad in 1940 after it kicked a German soldier to death has won recognition as an equine hero of the Resistance. Page 10

Freetown horror

With their homes burned, their women abducted as sex slaves and their lives shattered, starving residents of Freetown emerged to scavenge for food. Page 12

Hussein returns

Jordan gave way to euphoria yesterday as King Hussein returned home from a six-month cancer cure to resume control of the desert kingdom he has ruled for 47 years. Page 14

Clinton alarm

President Clinton made proposals to defend the United States from computer terrorists and to help Russia to dismantle its nuclear arsenal. Page 15

European protest: British Aerospace was yesterday hit by accusations that its £7 billion merger with the Marconi has damaged hopes of greater industrial co-operation within Europe. Page 23

Excitement: Jim Courier, the former world No 1, voiced suspicions that blood-doping was prevalent among Europe's elite players. Page 44

Prices rise: Inflation unexpectedly climbed above target in December, raising fears that the Bank of England may delay further interest rate cuts. Page 23

Markets: The FTSE 100 fell 96.30 to 6027.6. The pound rose 0.68 cents to \$1.6583 and 23p against the euro to 99.9 from 99.7. The sterling index rose to 99.9 from 99.7. Page 26

Rugby union: Only a day after being expelled from the Five Nations championship in a dispute over television income, England were welcomed back to the fold by the other Page 44

Tennis: Jim Courier, the former world No 1, voiced suspicions that blood-doping was prevalent among Europe's elite players. Page 44

Motor rallying: Colin McRae lies in fourth place after ten stages in the Monte Carlo Rally after an exceptional drive in the new - and untried - Ford Focus. Page 42

Football: West Ham United are hoping to use some of the proceeds from the sale of John Hartson to Wimbledon in order to lure Robert Lee, of Newcastle United, down to Upton Park. Page 40

Beauty and beast: The director Anand Tucker explains why portraying the life of Jacqueline du Pré in the film *Hilary and Jackie* was so painful. Page 33

Sour notes: The latest fly-on-the-wall TV documentary turns its gloomy light on the players of a beleaguered orchestra, as Richard Morrison discovers. Page 33

Mood of the age: As a new show of his work opens in London, the artist Julian Schnabel, once branded a brash American brat, reveals his enthusiasm for his art. Page 34

Mime time: At the International Mime Festival, literary figures provide the inspiration for three shows, while in *Once Derevo* plunge chaotically into clowning around. Page 35

Ancient remedies: Mexico's flora could be nature's storehouse for cures for many diseases. The ancient culture of the Mayans is also providing promising material for scientists. Page 16

TV hero: Nick Ross, the presenter of BBC's *Crimeswatch*, is a have-a-go hero. Page 17

Born again: "I'm not sure I can sit through another bloody birthing class." The New York life of Joanna Coles. Page 17

Celebrating skills: The National Training Awards are a celebration of the best teaching available in industry. Page 30, 31

Landlord aid: Letting a property will soon be less complicated, thanks to a new scheme. Page 37

If the fear of another Balkan war accounts for the paralysis that seems to have overcome both NATO and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, their fears will be realised even sooner if Serbia is not checked. With the blood of Croats and Bosnian Muslims already on his hands, Mr Milosevic is determined to force another military solution - ethnic cleansing, in other words - on Kosovo.

The Straits Times

THOMAS STRATHCLYDE

Change in Parliament should be effected only after careful cross-party discussion and full public consultation. Instead, in a typical display of arrogance, the Government will plough on with scarcely a weekly "consultation". Page 38

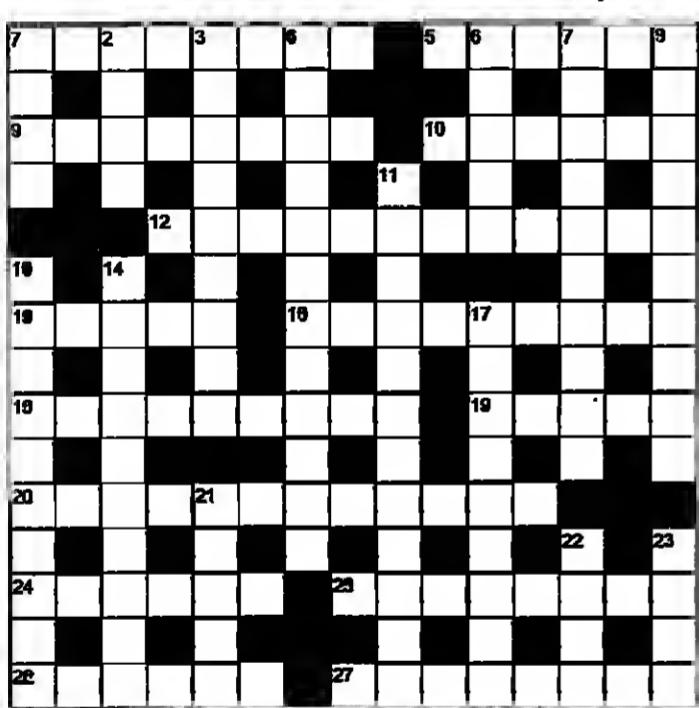
ALAN COREN

I have to tell you (for it is my curse to do so) that in AD97,991 it will be possible to dig for wrinkles on Cricklewood beach. Page 18

Jerzy Grotowski, theatre director; Sir Francis McLean, Director of Engineering at the BBC; Sir Thomas Serlevar, colonial official. Page 21

Secure training centres; Hume and Carey; organ donors; house owners' rights; Kosovo; drink-drive limit; millennium bug. Page 19

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,005



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Sun rises: 7.55 am; **Sun sets:** 4.28 pm;
Moon sets: 7.57 pm; **Moon rises:** 9.24 am

First quarter: January 24th
London 4.28 pm to 7.54 am
Edinburgh 4.28 pm to 7.50 am
Belfast 4.28 pm to 8.27 am
Manchester 4.28 pm to 8.12 am
Penzance 4.55 pm to 8.10 am

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Recycled paper made up 49.9% of the raw material for UK newspapers in 1997

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THE TIMES

FREE BOOKS WALKERS

Times Two Crossword, page 44

General: rain in the south and south-east of England will clear slowly and it will become brighter. The rest of England and Wales will have sunny spells and showers. Northern Ireland and western Scotland will have thundery showers with snow over land. Wind, Max temp: 8C (43F).

London, SE & Cem S England, E Anglia: rain clearing, fresh southwesterly wind. Max temp: 10C (50F).

Midlands, E Engla, Channel Islands: light rain then sunny spells and showers. A moderate southwesterly. Max: 11C (52F).

SW, NW, Cent H & NE England, Wales, Lake District: lots of Max sunny spells and showers. A moderate south-westerly wind. Max temp: 10C (50F).

North: rain then bright spells and snow will move across Scotland and Northern Ireland. The rest of the United Kingdom will be mainly dry and bright.

Changes to the chart below from moon: low A will fill slowly while moving little; low Z will fill in situ and lose its identity; high B will see little change.

20

10

25

WARM FRONT

COLD FRONT

OCCULTED FRONT

Highest day temp: Hawarden, Flintshire 14C (57F); lowest day max: Loch Glascarnoch 6C (43F); highest rainfall: Eskdalemuir 0.92in; highest sunshine: Belfast and Newcastle, 4.1hr.

20

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TODAY

Aberdeen 237 4.2 15/02 4.4

Bath 236 3.4 15/02 4.5

Belfast 239 3.2 20/02 12.2

Birmingham 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Cardiff 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Derry 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Exeter 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Glasgow 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

London 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Nottingham 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Sheffield 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Southampton 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Swindon 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

Wales 234 5.8 19/02 5.3

THE TIMES

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TODAY

ECONOMICS

Janet Bush finds it hard to be scared about a recession

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Harsh realities of life in a great orchestra

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Gough's burst keeps England well on course

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AND
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

AtHome creates Web giant with £4bn deal

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

ATHOME, the Internet service provider controlled by AT&T, yesterday agreed to buy Excite, the loss-making Internet search company linked to BT, for \$6.7 billion (£4 billion) in the biggest online merger.

The combination overtakes the \$4.2 billion link-up of America Online and Netscape announced last

November, now worth about \$6.6 billion after the recent surge in Internet shares. Online consolidation is expected to drive technology stocks to new heights and valuation records.

The AtHome-Excite merger also marks the deepening of the alliance between BT and AT&T. The two transatlantic telecom leaders last year agreed to expand their traditional phone service in tandem but stopped short of a merger. BT owns

a 50 per cent stake in Excite UK, which it acquired for \$10 million.

Under the terms of the deal, AtHome will issue 1.04 of its shares for each Excite share, valuing them at \$106.27, a 57 per cent premium to the last closing price. At the start of trading yesterday, shares jumped to \$106 before falling back to about \$95.

According to the agreement, the deal will be whisked through and is supposed to be completed in three

months. The completion would almost coincide with the closure of the \$32 billion AT&T takeover of TCI. The cable company is AtHome's biggest shareholder.

The Excite acquisition forms part of AT&T's new strategy to belatedly seek leadership in the Internet sector. Michael Armstrong, the executive chairman appointed last year, tied the phone giant's future to new media with the TCI deal.

Mr Armstrong hopes to build an integrated media and telecoms company that delivers phone services and Internet content via the same hardware. With TCI, he acquired the hardware link to the Internet, while Excite will now form the content backbone.

Excite has a range of free websites offering news, chat rooms, retailing and listings. The company earns revenue from advertising on the edges of the company screens. It has never made a profit. In the third quarter of last year, it had revenues of \$44 million.

These statistics have made some Wall Street analysts sceptical about the deal. Rick Berry, an analyst at JP Turner, said: "I have trouble seeing a \$1 billion market cap for Excite. They're overpaying for it, but that's characteristic of anytime we are in a mania."

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

	FTSE 100	6027.8	(-96.3)
Yield:	2.27%	1.37%	0.95%
FTSE All Share	2780.73	1.34%	0.92%
Netex:	1277.00	1.34%	0.92%
New York:	Dow Jones	9252.49	(-88.06)
S&P Composite	1238.32	(-3.94)	

US RATE

	4%*	3.5%	3%
Federal Funds	4.00%	3.50%	3.00%
Long bond	1.02%	0.50%	0.30%

LONDON MONEY

	Smith interbank	5%	(5%)
Little long gilt	119.31	[119.36]	
Future (Mar)	119.31	[119.36]	

STERLING

	New York	London	5	6	7	8	9	10
S	1.6553*	(1.6552)						
£	1.8585	(1.8518)						
€	1.4280	(1.4211)						
¥	186.65	(185.73)						
€ Index	99.9	(98.7)						

\$555 MILLION

	London	€	5	6	7	8	9	10
£	1.1606*	(1.1600)						
5	1.3751*	(1.3608)						
6	113.31*	(114.37)						
7	104.3	(104.5)						
Tokyo close Yen 114.06								

NORTH SEA OIL

	Brent 15-day (Apr.)	\$11.20	(\$10.95)
Gold			
London close	\$285.75	(\$286.95)	
Exchange rates			Page 24
* denotes midday trading price			

Mirror calls for two valuations

THE Mirror Group board has called for two independent valuations of the company to set a base line for takeover negotiations (Raymond Soddy writes).

The valuations of the group, whose titles include *The Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror* and *The People*, should be available before the end of this week.

The bid approach by Regional Independent Media, publisher of the *Yorkshire Post*, suggests a value of about £900 million, a figure that does not include debt. Trinity, a rival regional newspaper group, withdrew from bid talks with Mirror Group earlier this month.

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Brazilians lift interest to 41%

BY GABRIELA GAMINI AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE Brazilian Central Bank yesterday lifted interest rates as the Government vowed that it would not let Brazil's currency devaluation undermine its battle against inflation.

The rise in the bank's key lending rate, from 29 per cent to 41 per cent, dashed hopes of the bank cutting rates to kick-start the world's eighth-largest economy.

International markets responded nervously, with Wall Street falling sharply after a bright opening. The Dow Jones industrial average was down about 75 points at midday. The French and German markets ended modestly down, and the dollar came under pressure as traders switched into "safe haven" currencies, such as the Swiss franc.

The Brazilian currency, the real, slipped to about 1.61 to the dollar, before stabilising at

Commentary, page 25

Sunshine back at Club Med

BY MARTIN BARROW

PHILIPPE Bourguignon, the Frenchman credited with rescuing Euro Disney, appears to have pulled another ailing leisure company back from the brink.

Club Med, the resort group, yesterday reported a return to profit after attracting thousands of tourists back to its sun-in-the-sun holiday villages.

Price cuts of up to 30 per cent, renovated resorts and some new destinations have revitalised Club Med. The group had seemed to have been struck a fatal blow by a new generation of resort companies and the changing tastes of tourists who were deserting beaches in search of active holidays in exotic spots.

However, M Bourguignon has proved doubts wrong. His strategy pulled in 116,000 extra customers last year, a

Maggots, food of the cods?

BY SAEED SHAH

THE VAT man is having to roll up his sleeves and get to work on maggoty fish.

The VAT Tribunal, having determined that a Jaffa Cake was a cake and not a biscuit, must now rule whether maggots could be considered to be food. The outcome could have a significant financial bearing on the pet food and animal feed markets.

The tribunal is considering an appeal by an Essex company trading as Mag-it, a supplier of live maggots for anglers. The company, whose slogan is "Bag-it with Mag-it", had argued that maggots were food, food because fish eat them and, as a result, should be zero-rated for VAT purposes in common with most animal feeds.

But the VAT man disagreed, saying the primary purpose of maggots was not to feed the fish "excited".

Forget plans to create a European defence giant what is needed now is a peace keeping force. Relations between the British and German participants in the much discussed Euro-grouping have soured to the extent that Kate Adie is likely to be parachuted in to report on the hostilities at any moment.

The furious reaction of DaimlerChrysler's Jürgen Schrempp to the British Aerospace deal with Marconi indicates that his view of the balance of power in any Euro defence combine might not have concurred exactly with that of Sir Richard Evans. Sir Richard will now have to indulge in a little diplomacy if he wants to persuade the Germans and the French that the wisdom of them all joining forces remains intact. He will have to be extra careful not to remind them that he is making the case from a much stronger position than before. Injured feelings are likely to ensure that the timetable for any formal coming together is now significantly lengthened.

But neither the Continental peevishness nor the British stock market's reaction over the £8 billion merger does anything to detract from the reputation of Lord Simpson of Dunkeld as a seller of businesses. British Aerospace might not have been in a position to do the deal if he had not, as the culmination of his time with the group, sold Rover to BMW. It took him barely any time to turn

Lucas into LucasVarity, a deal which Victor Rice seems convinced was a takeover by another name. Now, after a couple of years at the helm of GEC, he is selling its defence business to his old firm.

The two form a logical combine but not rushing to clinch the deal, Lord Simpson has secured a better price than he might have done. The protestations from Germany owe more than a little to the feeling that Dasa has been a useful part of his negotiating process rather than a serious contender to complete the deal.

The challenge of building a future in the hugely competitive defence business now rests with Sir Richard Evans. Given that Gordon Brown is likely to favour throwing extra billions at the UK defence budget, that will be no easy task.

Given that the biggest orders are more likely to come from far flung parts than from Europe, it could be argued that he would do as well to try and pursue links with the United States rather than Europe.

Lord Simpson will be blissfully free of the political considerations that inevitably dominate the defence business. He intends

to roam free around the world building new GEC. It will, naturally, be a telecommunication business — who would want to build anything else at the moment? And it will be the test of whether he can build businesses as well as sell them.

Lord Weinstock was absolutely determined that Simpson would be his successor. Now the chosen one has a chance to demonstrate the talent he spotted.

Just what the doctor ordered

Mobile phones may suddenly have become a subject of intense interest round at Zeneca's Stanhope Gate headquarters. Received wisdom has it that no one will seek to spoil Zeneca's £45 billion merger with Astra — partly because Sir David Barnes and Tom McKillop, are so pally with their Swedish chums, but also because

of the goodwill problem that stands in the way of any hostile takeover. A bid would produce £30 billion of goodwill, creating an annual amortisation charge to profits of perhaps £1.5 billion. Even the mighty Glaxo Wellcome and Roche would think twice before taking on such a millstone.

However, the enthusiastic response that greeted Vodafone's £37.5 billion bid for AirTouch may have changed the rules of the game. Vodafone's investors seem to have completely ignored the prospect of an annual charge of £2 billion, focusing instead on the strategic benefits backed by strong and growing cashflow. If mobile phone investors are prepared to ignore the profit and loss account, perhaps Zeneca is more vulnerable than it looks.

Goldman Sachs, Zeneca's adviser, remains quietly confident its carefully prepared merger plans will not be thrown off course. For one thing, analysts and investors in the go-go tele-

communications sector are more comfortable with heavily loss-making companies than their more staid colleagues in pharmaceuticals, who still focus on traditional measures of earnings.

More compellingly, acquiring Zeneca (or Astra) may lack strategic logic for the possible bidders. Zeneca is too small to enable Glaxo Wellcome to achieve its growth goals; SmithKline Beecham is still licking its wounds while Roche appears to have ruled itself out of the bidding. And American companies such as Eli Lilly and Warner-Lambert may not be attracted by firms with patent expiry problems that are heavily dependent on the slower growing European market.

The Astra-Zeneca bond has been slowly forged and may be hard to break: the two companies' claims to a shared culture ring true. Combining their portfolios of cardiovascular and anaesthetic drugs also makes sense.

The betting remains that the deal will go through and that Dr McKillop will have his chance to run the world's third-largest drugs group. But as Zeneca prepares to issue its merger document, he could be forgiven for fumbling nervously with his Vodafone.

Brazil should say nuts to depression

Brazilians doubtless hope that devaluation will ease the pain endured in their vain attempt to maintain the value of the real and to keep foreign investors happy. They might even look to the UK experience after 1992 for reassurance.

If so, they will be disappointed. Their suffering from shrinking public services, mass firing and even freak weather, which tempered populist provincial governors to dash the austerity programme, seems destined to get worse — at least for a while.

The classic adjustment model, which worked here, suggests that Brazil should now cut interest rates but tighten its fiscal stance even further to sustain the currency and leave room for non-

inflationary recovery. But so far, short-term interest rates have jumped from 29 to 40 per cent, while those provincial governors and opposition legislators seem far from inclined to help Finance Minister Pedro Malan to balance his federal Budget. This appears to be a recipe for spiralling recession on the Asian model.

One reason the Government was so anxious to avoid the real sinking was the country's heavy foreign debt, both private and public. City economist Stephen Lewis reckons that servicing it could absorb an extra 4 per cent of national income, that could only be recouped if domestic interest rates fell. Now, unless the Budget can be righted by political consensus or a national fire sale, Brazil could stay in crisis, taking others with it.

Self-inflicted

DON'T blame potatoes. Furniture and household goods' retailers, it seems, pushed prices up before Christmas, perhaps ending autumn discounts, perhaps preparing for bigger percentage cuts in the sales. Either way, it could be costly. The price rises pushed underlying inflation above target, making it far less likely that the Bank of England will rush through another base rate cut next month. That would be bad news for household goods shops, heralding spring discounts to recoup lost sales. Serves them right.

Watchdog demands rights for savers

Consumers need "a no-quibble legal right to redress" if they buy a personal pension or savings plan that does not come up to scratch, a leading public rights group demands in a report published today.

The National Consumer Council (NCC) says that the draft Financial Services and Markets Bill, which will give statutory powers to a new unitary regulator, fails to provide adequate protection for the buying public.

David Hatch, NCC chairman, argues that the Bill should contain a set of consumer protection principles similar to those that underpin the 1979 Sale of Goods Act. The public has more legal clout if it sold a faulty kettle than if a pension or insurance policy fails to meet accepted standards.

GPE debenture
Great Portland Estates, the property group, yesterday announced the issue of £100 million first mortgage debenture stock due in 2029. It will be issued at a 1.35 per cent margin over the gross redemption yield of the 6 per cent Treasury stock 2028. Richard Peskin, chairman, said: "We have one or two interesting situations on the go. This seemed an ideal opportunity to raise £100 million for 30 years at the lowest domestic coupon for decades."

Zergo shares soar
Shares in Zergo Holdings, the company that produces software to encrypt information sent over the Internet, soared 30 per cent to 702p after signing a licensing agreement with Intel Corporation. The US microchip group Zergo will market Intel's Common Data Security Architecture (CDSA) technology, which allows software developers to make trading over the Internet secure. Zergo shares traded at just 165p last December.

Key Lekkerland
Goodwins, the Key Lekkerland member for the North West and West Midlands that was recently acquired by BWG, does not operate Spar or Mace retail outlets (Business News, January 9).

Somerfield to expand chain at Elf garages

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SOMERFIELD, the supermarket group, is to double the number of its stores offering home delivery over the next six months, and it is planning a big expansion of its chain of stores at petrol stations.

The company, which bought Kwik Save last March and announced better than expected interim results yesterday, said that it is open to 50 stores at Elf petrol stations in the next 18 months. There are currently five Elf stores and Somerfield will share in an investment of £25 million.

Somerfield's home delivery service, in which people buy their shopping in stores and have it delivered later that day, now operates in 150 stores, a rise of 90 in six months. The total will rise to 300 by the financial year end.

Assuming that Somerfield had owned Kwik Save in the first half of last year, group interim pre-tax profits rose by more than 30 per cent to £13.8 million. Reported pre-tax profits before exceptional items rose 100 per cent, from £5.8 million.

David Simons, the chief executive, said that Somerfield is in line to produce the forecast savings from the Kwik Save merger, of £70 million a year, within three years. Within the half-year, synergy savings of £7 million had been made.

The company has now converted ten of Kwik Save's 872 stores to the Somerfield format, and will convert 53 more by Easter. It has shut 14 stores in total in the first half, and the group now trades from 1,423.

Fully diluted earnings per share fell from 17.3p to 16.8p, but the interim dividend is to rise from 3.8p to 4.5p.

Like-for-like sales in Somerfield fascia stores grew 3.4 per cent in the first half, but by just 1.7 per cent at Christmas. Mr Simons said that this dip in growth tended to occur each year because people made trips to supermarkets, such as

Body Shop hit by poor sales

BY MATTHEW BARBOUR

BODY SHOP, the cosmetics retailer, yesterday became the latest victim of disappointing high street sales, when it gave the warning that Christmas trading in the UK would put a dent in full-year profits.

The company said that like-for-like sales in the ten weeks to January 2 were down 2 per cent. There had been a 6 per cent decline in the UK and a 9 per cent decline in America.

Patrick Gourlay, chief executive, also revealed that he would be announcing long-awaited plans for an overhaul of the group on Tuesday, prompting speculation of a write-up of its US operations. "City analysts slashed their full-year profit forecasts from

£31.5 million to as low as £25 million.

Mr Gourlay said the slowdown in UK sales reflected the wider slowdown in retailing over the holiday period, and that sales in Europe, the Far East and Canada were improving. However, sales in Asia remained on a downward slope, though a 9 per cent drop in sales represented an improvement on recent double-digit decreases.

Worldwide, Body Shop saw sales rise by 1 per cent in the ten weeks to January 2 and by 3 per cent over the preceding 44 weeks. "The poor performance in the US will be offset by our cost-reduction scheme," promised Mr Gourlay.

Mr Gourlay said the figures would have been considerably worse without a 30 per cent jump in Christmas gift sales as well as strong growth in designer lines. Total sales were ahead by 1.4 per cent.

Still optimistic at Debenhams

BY MATTHEW BARBOUR

STRONG sales of gifts and non-clothing products and a decision to delay discounts until December 27 helped Debenhams, the department store group, to withstand the worst of the high street gloom over Christmas.

The group said that in the 20 weeks to January 16 like-for-like sales, excluding sales from new store space, were down 2.5 per cent on the previous year.

However, it added that the figures would have been considerably worse without a 30 per cent jump in Christmas gift sales as well as strong growth in designer lines. Total sales were ahead by 1.4 per cent.

Peter Jarvis, the chairman, said: "The retail trading environment remains challenging and it is difficult to predict how it will develop over the next few months. However, we remain confident with our well-established and proven strategy."

Debenhams was demerged from Burton Group, now Arcadia, a year ago.

Arcadia, which includes clothing chains such as Top Shop, Dorothy Perkins, Pringle and Racing Green, will release its own trading statement tomorrow.

Investors reacted positively to the news and shares of Debenhams yesterday closed up 3 per cent at 350p.

Carlton is go with £91m ITC library deal

BY RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

CARLTON Communications has boosted significantly its library of television programmes and feature films with its \$150 million (£91 million) purchase of the old ITC library, until recently part of PolyGram Filmed Entertainment.

Michael Green, the Carlton chairman, said yesterday the ITC library "fits perfectly with our growing collection of television programmes and films".

A key part of Carlton's strategy has been to accumulate programme rights and its library already includes the Rank, Romulus, Rohauer and Korda collections.

Carlton said the new library, expected to have sales of about £8 million to £10 million a year, would be at least earnings-enhancing in the current financial year.

Carlton's annual report, published yesterday, showed Mr Green's salary increased by £5,000 to £55,000 in the year to September. His total remuneration rose from £58,000 to £65,000, including a £5,000 bonus.

The library ended up with Universal Studios, the Seagram film-making subsidiary, with total remuneration of £51,000.

Carlton kept close to poten-

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MICHAEL CARY

Boost for Energis on the eve of promotion

THE CITY institutions have got themselves in a mess over Energis, up 132p to £16.55. National Grid is selling up to 75 million shares in order to drop its stake below 50 per cent.

Brokers were testing the water ahead of the placing yesterday. Once it is complete, Energis will be catapulted into the top 100 companies where it will be valued at £3.7 billion.

Unfortunately, most institutions do not have anywhere near the weighting in the shares they would require for a blue chip. The price looks set to climb higher in the short term. National Grid rose 17p to 545p.

Share prices generally went into reverse, worried by the latest rise in Brazilian interest rates and unnerved by suggestions that the latest inflation numbers had undermined the prospect of another cut in domestic rates by the Bank of England.

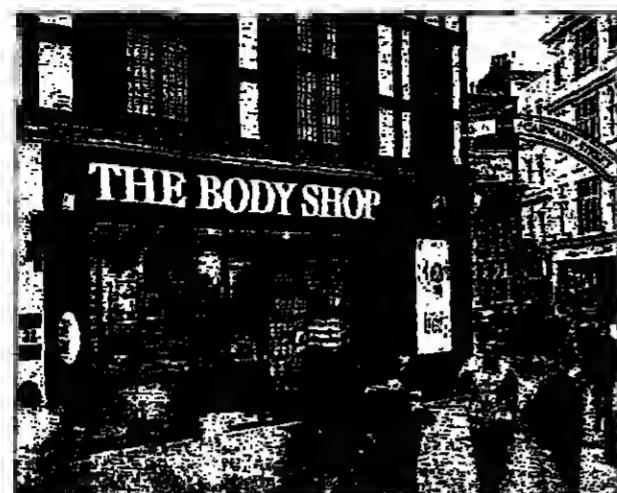
Early losses on Wall Street left prices in London deep in the red although UK shares closed above their lows. The FTSE 100 index lost an early lead but managed to stay above the 6,000 level. It closed 96.3 down at 6,027.6. Turnover again exceeded more than a billion shares with the FTSE 250 index losing 29.2 at 4,874.6.

Brokers and fund managers expressed a degree of caution over the British Aerospace acquisition of GEC's Marconi defence arm for £7.7 billion. BAE was the worst performer among the top 100 with the price losing 68p at 435p, while GEC shed 3p at 546p.

Now the speculators are tipping GEC to bid for Racal Electronics, up 18p at 386p. There has been plenty of speculation in Racal shares in recent months with followers convinced that outgoing chairman Sir Ernest Harrison is ready to go out on a high note.

This week's gloomy trading update from Nestlé could have an impact on rival Unilever, 54p easier at 648p. The Swiss group reported signs of a slowdown in its main markets during the fourth quarter.

Cautious comments by HSBC Securities, the broker, about prospects left Diageo 11p down at 670p. It has reiterated its "sell" recommendation and set a target price for the shares of 540p. There was big turnover in merger candidate Lasmo with the price receding 34p to 103p as several large lines of stock went through the



Body Shop retreated 4p to 85p as brokers cut their forecasts for the current year in the wake of a profits warning

market. They included two parcels of 7.6 million at 9.6 million at 102p. By the close of business a total of 20.6 million had been traded. Enterprise Oil, which is merging with Lasmo, eased 44p to 255p.

Hopes of a bid drove House of Fraser up 15p to 89p. City speculators say the department stores group could go the same way as rival Sears, un-

changed at 348p, which is facing a contested bid from a consortium headed by retailer Philip Green. Both companies have several things in common — they have Phillips & Drew as a major shareholder and have seen their share price under pressure.

Phillips & Drew is also playing a big role in the fate of Mirror Group, 4p dearer at 311p, a rise of 14p.

The bulls are falling over themselves to pick up more shares in Zergo Holdings, 162p dearer at 702p. The information and technology specialist clinched two separate deals with PricewaterhouseCoopers, the accountant, and Intel, the microchip manufacturer.

Sentia Engineering was an early casualty losing 6p at 99p as one seller unloaded a line of 1.17 million shares at 97p.

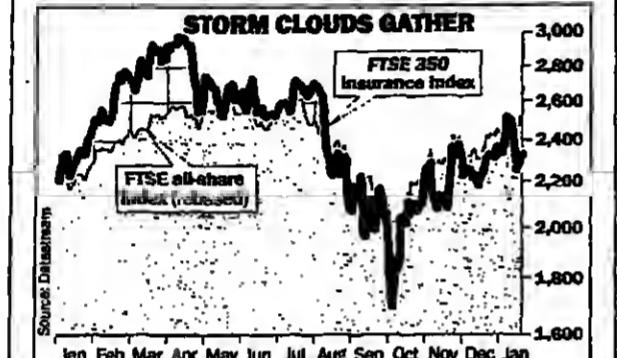
□ GILT-EDGED: The prospect of another cut in interest rates suffered a setback after news of an unexpected rise in the underlying inflation rate. The bond market gave up an early lead with rate-sensitive, shorter-dated issues suffering heaviest losses as prices closed mixed.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 5p to £19.31 as a total of 31,000 contracts were completed.

Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 put on 3p at £151.30, while at the shorter end Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 17p down at £107.73.

□ NEW YORK: Caution on Brazil and profit-taking in the banking sector forces shares lower in morning trading. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 88.06 at 9,252.49.

Other than shoring up the



THERE was a mixed response in the insurance sector to another round of profit downgrades.

CGU fell 30p to 881p as Morgan Stanley Dean Witter cut its forecast of operating profits for 1998 from £562 million to £500 million, blaming bad weather and higher claims.

Chairhouse Tilney, the broker, has also reduced its forecast by 19 per cent to £500 million. Both Chairhouse and Morgan Stanley have taken their red pencils to profit forecasts for Royal

& SunAlliance, up 5p at 481p. They have cut from £470 million to £382 million and from £419 million to £391 million respectively.

CGU and RSA both reported profits downturn at the nine-month stage in November, which prompted a revision of profit numbers in the sector.

Alfred Zurich, the broker, has also reduced its forecast by 19 per cent to £500 million. Both Chairhouse and Morgan Stanley have taken their red pencils to profit forecasts for Royal

AXA, the French insurer,

and the rest of the insurance industry.

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Those of us old enough to remember the last two British recessions with acute discomfort are unfazed by the current economic slowdown.

For this columnist, the early 1980s recession coincided with my departure from university and entering the jobs market for the first time. I remember deciding not to read newspapers for the last six months of my university life because headlines about mass unemployment were worrying enough to put me off all thoughts of Shelly, Blake and Virgil. The next recession will forever stick in the mind because of the catastrophic rises in interest rates that were needed to stop the preceding boom at a time when many people of my age were borrowed up to the hilt in our desire to become part of Margaret Thatcher's home-owning democracy. Between the day, in the late 1980s when I signed my mortgage contract and the first monthly payment, interest rates had risen alarmingly by 2 per cent.

It is hard to be scared this time around. For all the doom-laden

talk of recession and high-profile job losses, employment is at a record, vacancies are only just below their recent historic highs and unemployment has only recently begun to edge higher.

Interest rate movements have been decidedly modest in recent times, ensuring that consumers have not been ambushed as they were last time round. In this cycle, rates moved from a trough of 5.25 per cent in February 1994 to a peak last June of 7.50 per cent; a range of only 2.25 per cent if rates fall no further. This compares with the previous cycle in which rates bottomed out at 7.50 per cent (the peak this time) in May 1988 and doubled to 15 per cent in October 1989, a range of 7.50 per cent.

Newspaper headlines, industrial confidence surveys, retailers' press releases may all be as dramatically woeful as they have been

on the brink of past recessions but all the German economic indicators tell a story of much greater stability, far less economic imbalance, a much shallower cycle and a relative lack of macroeconomic policy mistakes or misjudgments by consumers and businesses.

Take all this evidence together and it is difficult to mount a convincing argument that Britain is in for a recession severe enough to be given the name. Indeed, unless events turn very nasty overseas and remain nasty, a case can be made for a shallow, short-lived downturn or, as the Treasury and the Bank are guessing, none at all.

One of the biggest changes from past cycles is the behaviour of inflation. Despite yesterday's news of a blip up in underlying inflation — due partly to bad weather boosting food prices and partly because of furniture retailers raising prices

(and losing sales as a result) — inflation is extremely tame compared with previous cycles. In the late 1980s, inflation reached 10 per cent. During this cycle, inflation has hovered between 3 and 4 per cent.

Much has been made of the "consumer boom" in 1997 on the back of dematerialisation windfall gains. But consumer spending has been positively anaemic despite the windfall billions. Consumer spending has grown by an average of 2.8

per cent a year since the trough of the recession in the second quarter of 1992. This compares with a growth rate of 8.1 per cent in the first quarter of 1988.

Let us briefly look at the housing market, so crucial to the 1980s boom and bust. According to the Halifax, house price inflation peaked in 1997 at 7 per cent. The Nationwide put the peak at 13 per cent. Neither of these figures compares with the 35 per cent increase in house prices recorded in the year to October 1988.

Another measure of the relative health of the economy is the financial position of households and of companies. Both are far less indebted than they have been at the onset of previous recessions. In the late 1980s, the personal sector racked up debts 3 per cent of gross domestic product. By the third quarter of last year, the personal

sector was still running a surplus, albeit a relatively small one of 1.1 per cent of GDP. Non-financial corporations were carrying a financial deficit of 2 per cent of GDP in the year ending in the third quarter of 1998. This compares with a deficit of some 5 per cent of GDP at the start of 1990.

It is not just people and companies who have behaved far less profligately in the current cycle than in the previous one — scared no doubt by the mess they found themselves in when interest rates doubled. Since 1992, successive Chancellors have proved to be careful stewards of the public finances.

The culmination of years of Conservative tax increases, tough control on public spending by Gordon Brown (and, of course, growth after sterling was allowed to float) has been that the budget deficit has been cut from some £50 billion

at the peak to a likely surplus this year and balance in 1999-2000.

So here are some reasons to be cheerful about the year ahead. Without a boom (in growth or credit), there need not be a bust. With the public finances headed for balance, with inflation low and with sterling floating freely, rates can be cut by as much as is needed. Consumer spending, which is so important a component of British GDP, would have to implode to cause a recession and that is not happening. As Tim Congdon of Lombard Street Research put it recently: "The jeremiads need to remember that sales of mobile phones and foreign holidays are booming and that sales data from Marks & Spencer and John Lewis are not the whole story."

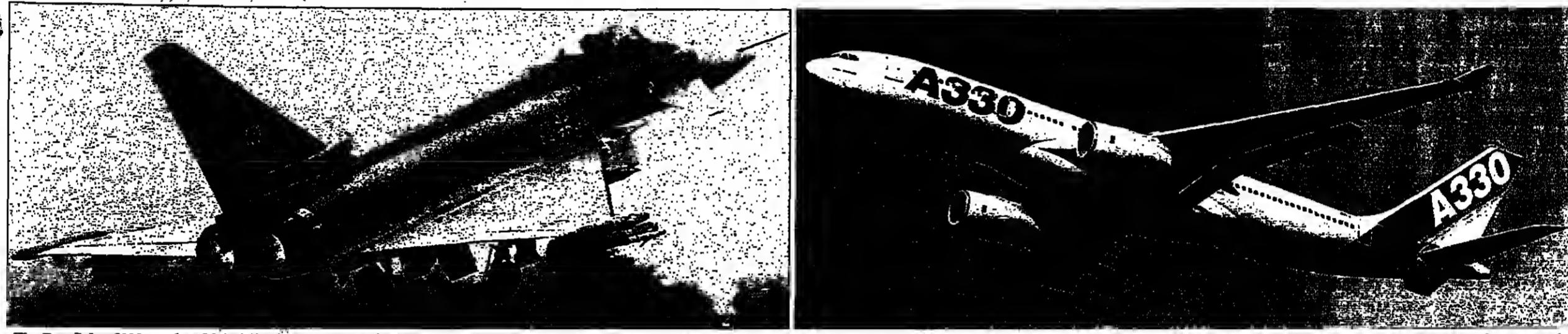
On Friday we will see the first snapshot of fourth-quarter GDP with the City forecasting growth of 0.1 per cent. Given small signs of a recovery in business and consumer confidence, there may be no time to squeeze in even a technical recession before the rebound everyone expects in the second half.

Little time left for a recession



JANET BUSH

Europe cries foul as New BAe emerges



The Eurofighter 2000, produced jointly by BAe and Dasa of Germany, Casa of Spain and Italy's Finmeccanica and the Airbus A330, which BAe developed with Aérospatiale of France, Dasa and Casa, are examples of how European co-operation can work

Adam Jones reports on the reaction to the 'Anglo-British' deal

It is easy to feel sorry for France. Badgered by Britain and Germany, the French Government has swallowed its pride and started the long process of privatising Aérospatiale, the aircraft company that dreamt up Concorde, to make the business a more acceptable partner in pan-European mergers.

Fully aware of the strikes that can follow attempts to overhaul state industries in France, it also privately signalled that it would cut its stake in Thomson-CSF, the defence electronics group, to as little as 2 per cent.

And then what happens? For all their rhetoric about cross-border deals, the two big UK defence companies, British Aerospace and GEC's Marconi Electronic Systems, produce an "Anglo-British" solution: an £8 billion merger that would have been condemned as a backward step had it happened in France.

The French are not alone in being concerned about the perceived insularity of the deal. When Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, the chief executive of GEC, and Sir Richard Evans, the chairman of British Aerospace, saw Tony Blair on Monday, the Prime Minister is understood to have reiterated the Government's desire for a link with continental Europe.

Then there are the Germans. The most logical continental partner for British Aerospace has always been Dasa, the aerospace arm of DaimlerChrysler. Talks have been stopping and starting since 1995 and the two sides came close to an agreement before Christmas.

Yesterday, GEC was at pains to say that it did not dare crash these talks. Indeed, GEC, BAe and Dasa sat round

On-off relationship ends in marriage of convenience



Weinstock: missed opportunity

to become so powerful a supplier to the Ministry of Defence. Relations between the companies grew worse under the next BAe regime, which teamed Sir Roland Smith, the ebullient marketing expert, with Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo, the chief executive. Sir Roland had little respect for the management style of the ageing Weinstock. Egos collided. GEC was seen as an aggressive predator. Sir Roland went after turning BAe into a giant in its own right, buying Rover among much else to con-

struct a British equivalent of Daimler-Benz or Fiat. But lack of long-term finance led to a cash crisis when the slump of 1991-92 brought big losses on civil aircraft.

Again, GEC had a chance to pounce. In September 1992, a rights issue was floundering. Sir Roland Smith had gone. BAe's board was in disarray and its market had shrunk to £440 million. But Weinstock lost his prize by refusing to risk GEC's funds on such an ailing outfit. New men at BAe were not inclined to sell it for a pittance. The moment was soon gone, one of the great lost opportunities of corporate history.

Sir Dick Evans, who did so much to transform BAe into a £9.5 billion company in six years, got on better with GEC but understandably did not want to be junior partner. Issues of executive pecking order are thought to have dogged on/off talks over a defence merger since 1995. It was not made easier when GEC came under the leadership of Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, who had run Rover for BAe when Sir Dick was chief executive but left to be top dog at Lucas. Only a government wile force under Tony Blair and the threat of being picked off separately seem finally to have brought them together.

GRAHAM SEARLE

No Mayo

ONE man not asked his opinion of the GEC decision to merge its Marconi business with British Aerospace was Lord Weinstock, still in occupancy at GEC's shrunken headquarters and chairman emeritus.

Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, his replacement as chief executive, said Weinstock's post these days was not a hands-on one and the man who largely created GEC was not party to the discussions. "I'm sure he

may be trying to contact me as we speak," said Simpson cheekily.

My man at yesterday's briefing was startled to see that Weinstock's notoriously parsimonious streak lingers on, though John Mayo, the sometimes combative finance director of GEC, was spotted carefully inspecting the complimentary pastries beforehand.

Then the real Mayo walked in. His eerily lookalike is in charge of the catering at Warburg Dillon Read.

A MEDIA-WATCHER was asked, in the light of the rash of reports predicting his downfall, to give a rating to David Montgomery, Mirro Group's chief executive. "About 60 per cent," came the reply. "He's very good at cost-cutting." And what about future strategy? "That's the 40 per cent."

Light sleep

MICHAEL FOOT, head of banking supervision at the Financial Services Authority, was telling of how he was



forced to sleep at work over the new year because of the euro. One problem: the FSA, like many modern offices, has one of those automatic lighting systems that work in the presence of a warm body. Asleep or not.

So he had to kip down in the boardroom, the only place you can switch the light off. He will be there next New Year's Eve, too, he expects. The only advantage this time is the magnificent view the FSA's Canary Wharf offices have of the Millennium Dome.

Offline

IT WAS kind of Barclays Corporate Banking to invite

a colleague for a ride around London in a stretch limo drinking champagne while testing "the world's first ever remote access business electronic banking product which can be accessed from a fully-mobile sub-notebook computer" (read: direct banking from a laptop).

Alas, it became apparent, as the limo moved off, that the device didn't work. Barclays suggested they parked and tried; my colleague said no, it was supposed to be mobile.

They drove on. At last the device crackled into life, only to cut out again a few yards later. And so it went on. Still, the champagne was OK.

GLANBIA sounds like somewhere you go for a cheap holiday, but it is the latest daft corporate name dreamt up by the image consultants. It replaces the perfectly respectable Avonmore Waterford Group and joins a hall of infamy that includes Diageo, Hyder, the old Welsh Water, and Chorion. It comes from two Gaelic words, one meaning pure — oh, look, you don't really want to know all this. But out of sheer childishness I ring Avonmore's London man and manage to persuade him it also means "pig manure" in Finnish. (It doesn't.)

Sign off

LOOK at the picture below. Is it: a) Glanbia's new corporate logo; b) the amoeba that causes glanbia, a West African fever; or, c) your doctor's signature on a prescription to treat it?

It is the signature of David Adoo, company secretary of Carlton, in the latest accounts. Chairman Michael Green's is little better. The only one to master joined-up writing is June de Moller, managing director. And she's retiring.

MARTIN WALLER
city.diary@the-times.co.uk



What is it? Answers on a postcard to Carlton

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growth

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High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	% CHG	PE
545	365	Afraid Diamond	45	-12	+2	12
424	365	Alpha PFTY	35	-12	+2	12
355	325	Bam Sherry	35	-12	+2	12
555	575	Champagne A	15	-12	+2	12
525	515	Champagne D	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne E	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne F	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne G	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne H	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne I	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne J	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne K	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne L	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne M	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne N	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne O	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne P	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne Q	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne R	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne S	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne T	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne U	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne V	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne W	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne X	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne Y	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne Z	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne AA	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne BB	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne CC	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne DD	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne EE	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne FF	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne GG	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne HH	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne II	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne JJ	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne KK	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne LL	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne MM	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne NN	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne OO	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne PP	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne QQ	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne RR	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne SS	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne TT	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne YY	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne ZZ	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne AAA	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne BBB	15	-12	+2	12
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125	125	Champagne III	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne JJJ	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne KKJ	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne LLJ	15	-12	+2	12
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125	125	Champagne NNJ	15	-12	+2	12
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125	125	Champagne AAAA	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne BBBB	15	-12	+2	12
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125	125	Champagne DDDD	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne EEEE	15	-12	+2	12
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125	125	Champagne GGGG	15	-12	+2	12
125	125	Champagne HHHH	15	-12	+2	12
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Edward Fennell presents a two-page special report on the Government's annual celebration of the best training in industry

Winners reap the reward of a top workforce

A recent victim of a botched programme complained earlier this month: "Training? Who needs it? Training means spending three hours in a training room, falling asleep while being lectured at by someone about computers. Frankly, I'm very sceptical about the value of that."

And quite right, too. Training without targets or benefits is useless. The Government's annual National Training Awards, launched this week, aims to be an antidote to this kind of wasteful training. With the backing of key organisations such as the CBI, the TUC and the Institute of Personnel and Development — all of whom are represented on the judging panel — National Training Awards give formal recognition each autumn to a hundred or so organisations and a score of individuals who have engaged in "exceptionally effective training".

The award winners provide models of good practice of what can be achieved when training is well managed as a business development. This can often lead to less money being spent on training — but being spent more thoughtfully and effectively.

Training is no longer the Cinderella it once was. The massive increase in the use of information technology and the current culture of customer service and quality systems has compelled employers to invest in the skills of their workforce. It was noticeable that during the last recession (for the first time) training was not slashed by the accountants as an unnecessary in the balance sheet.

Even so, there are strong signs that while the spirit is willing, the delivery is often weak. Employers recognise the importance of training to their organisations but are

still prone to lazy planning and poor preparation. Facile short cuts — notably the off-the-shelf, generic course — still provide many employers with the bulk of their training diet. The result is bland or irrelevant courses, inadequate monitoring of achievement and little, if any, follow-up. Sure, the staff have undergone training. But what have they learnt? Has their performance materially improved? All too often nobody knows, or cares.

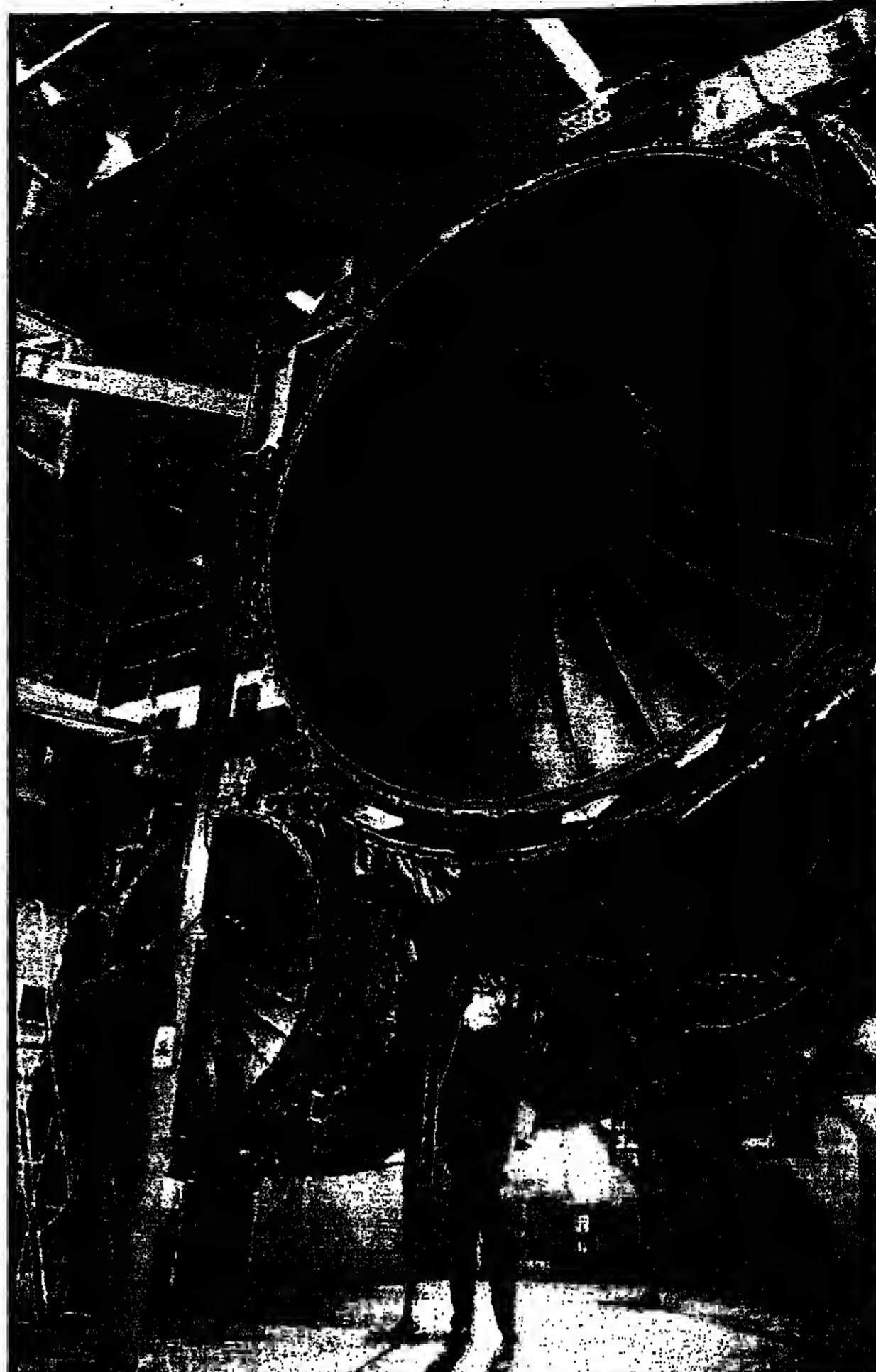
So, despite being in their second decade, National Training Awards still have an important mission to accomplish. In their early years the awards helped to put training on the business agenda and many of Britain's best-known companies such as Rolls-Royce, British Steel and Lucas Industries have regularly appeared among the ranks of the winners. Now more than ever, their message is that training must be delivered in a planned and professional way to realise specific benefits, whether for organisations or for individuals.

One of the main ways of communicating this message is through the nationwide series of workshops and presentations organised by training and enterprise councils (Tecs) and local enterprise councils in Scotland. These workshops have become useful training exercises in their own right as they convey the underlying principles of effective training.

Cliff Ellison, the chief executive of Rochdale Tec, is a great fan of the awards. He chairs a panel that brings together 14 organisations in the North West to promote the National Training Awards and to groom entrants for success.

"Many companies are interested in the awards, attend one of our workshops and then recognise that their own

● National Training Award Workshops are being held across the North West from January through to March. For more information contact the NTA North West hotline on 01606 734385. For more information about the Awards generally contact the National Training Awards Office on 01142 593491. Entries for the 1999 awards should be received by May 14.



Rolls-Royce is among many of Britain's better known companies to appear regularly among the ranks of winners



High performance business and management training has helped Scania to realise its ambitions

Pole position in the trucks race

Graham Cramp of Scania (Great Britain) is not much given to sentiment or frippery. He has looked at a number of external awards and badges and dismissed them as irrelevant.

But he is a great fan of National Training Awards. As Scania's franchise and staff development manager, he must persuade franchisees to attend courses that help to build their business.

These franchisees are a sceptical lot — but they do respond to genuine quality.

That's why Mr Cramp was keen to gain a National Training Award as an endorsement of what he is providing.

"Our franchisees must pay to attend our courses so they need to be confident that they will get value for money. Having a National Training Award helps to demonstrate that," he says.

Scania has won National Training Awards twice in the past four years and its approach is firmly grounded in the business needs of the organisation. "Some years ago we were given the task of increasing

it gave them confidence in what they would experience. And, finally, it was good for our customers because they could feel reassured about the quality of service they would receive.

Like many National Training Award winners Mr Cramp is critical of much of the training that is available on the market.

"I don't believe in quick fixes," he says. "For training to be effective it needs to be undertaken over a period of time and should ideally include a measurement of what people can do before the start of the course so that progress can be measured. You also need to evaluate its long-term impact."

Scania's business strategy based on training has paid off. The company reached pole position in the trucks business three years ahead of schedule. And it is still committed to the value of National Training Awards.

"The next time we have a training programme that is exceptionally effective then we shall definitely enter it," says Mr Cramp.

"It was good for me and my staff. It was also good for the people coming on the course —

Investing in drivers as well as diggers makes sense at Shepherd Construction

Smart builders pass the site test

THE construction industry is bedevilled by cowboy builders, but Shepherd Construction has no such reputation — quite the reverse. Based in Yorkshire but operating nationally, Shepherd has a string of eminent clients (including, for example, Marks & Spencer) who return to the company on a regular basis.

One of Shepherd's greatest strengths is that it has a permanently employed workforce of more than 1,000. It also has a commitment to training and retaining its staff on a long-term basis.

John Foreman, the personnel director, points out that the family-owned company has a training record stretching right back to the early Sixties, when its founder, Sir Peter Shepherd, established its corporate values.

That training tradition continues today under the present chairman, Paul Shepherd.

Shepherd Construction is engaged on a wide spectrum of training, ranging from Modern Apprenticeships to advanced technical and management training linked to post-graduate qualifications.

"Training is focused on our operating needs," Mr Foreman says. "It is driven by hard business objectives and we are always concerned that any training programme we are involved in, at whatever level, should produce results on the bottom line."

This practical attitude has won

Shepherd two National Training Awards in recent years. "We see National Training Awards as a way of measuring ourselves against the best in the country," Mr Foreman says.

"When we win an award it is good for our pride, and also a way of showing our customers that we are concerned about the skill levels of our staff. Discriminating clients recognise the importance of that."

Mr Foreman is a keen supporter of the work done nationally by the Construction Industry Training Board to

ensure that the industry's skill needs are met. But he is worried that training is not taken seriously enough in some companies.

"Many managers take far more time and care in selecting a new JCB than in ensuring that a driver is properly trained to operate it," he says. "Yet without the right training, the equipment will not repay the investment. It is important that employers should get the right balance in their priorities and appreciate how important training is — provided it is done properly."

Mr Foreman also feels that it is too easy for managers to select off-the-shelf courses without questioning whether they will be genuinely relevant in the workplace.

"National Training Awards really test the effectiveness of training," Mr Foreman says. "That is why we think they are worthwhile."



Training award winner: a Bombardier maintenance team

Skilled personnel take off in Ulster

A global aerospace manufacturer has stayed ahead by constantly upgrading staff training

Despite the Troubles, Northern Ireland has had at least one long-running success story, with the aircraft-maker Shorts, now part of Bombardier Aerospace, the Canadian-based multinational.

During the past decade the company has won eight National Training Awards, an extraordinary achievement. The success rate, however, reflects the company's commitment to training. As the world's third largest civil aircraft manufacturer (making, for example, the Learjet, the Challenger and the Global Express), Bombardier has introduced a new aircraft every year for the past six years.

This level of innovation demands that the company cannot stand still. It needs to develop its skill base constantly, both technically and managerially.

David Molloy is the French-Canadian acting vice-president for human resources for Shorts in Belfast. "The skills of the Northern Ireland workforce are well-respected throughout the company," he says. "Laurent Beaudoin, the president of Bombardier, was commenting on them in Canada recently. And the company has a strong commitment to continue developing those skills. During the past ten years we have spent £70 million on training alone in Belfast."

But where do National Training Awards fit in? "I think that external evaluation and recogni-

tion of what one is doing is very important. It is satisfying to receive a government award of this kind," says Mr Molloy.

Although Bombardier has a strong respect for the cultural and social differences within its organisation (it operates in 11 countries across North America and Europe), it uses a common, company-wide performance management system in which skills, career development and succession planning are closely interwoven.

Based on regular personal appraisals, the planning of training is linked directly to the overall needs of the business and the career progress of each individual.

Everything, ultimately, is geared to financial results. The various National Training Award-winning entries have all stemmed from this process.

Its entry for last year was typical of its approach. Featuring a training programme for employees who worked on aerospace machinery maintenance, Shorts was able to show that dependence on suppliers had been sharply reduced. This led to savings of about £3 million and a 20 per cent improvement in engineering maintenance productivity.

With results like that it is not surprising that Bombardier has no hesitation in continuing its training commitment in Northern Ireland — and to support the National Training Awards.

More initiatives bubble in the forge

The minister in charge of boosting Britain's skills base has high hopes, says Edward Fennell



Mudie concerned

As the recently appointed Minister for Lifelong Learning, George Mudie has a down-to-earth approach to the job of steering the UK's investment in job training.

Representing a Leeds constituency that has seen a massive reduction of the local clothing industry, he knows how important it is for people to develop new skills and for communities to plan ahead to attract fresh investment and jobs.

With the task of spearheading initiatives such as the University for Industry and the new Individual Learning Accounts, Mr Mudie is confident that 1999 will be the year that training for jobs starts to attract its share of the limelight at the Department for Education and Employment.

As its annual recognition of excellence in training takes place, the National Training Awards continue to play an important part in the department's initiatives to encourage greater take-up of effective training.

Mr Mudie's particular concern is that employers should adopt a liberal approach, so that programmes are not too narrowly focused but, rather, help to develop employees' capabilities.

As its annual recognition of excellence in training the NTA continues to play an important part in the DfEE's suite of initiatives to encourage the greater take-up of effective training. In recent years, however, the number of applications for NTAs has dropped.

For example, since 1996 there has been a fall of 33 per cent. Official views are mixed on this.

The numbers of entrants may have declined, but the quality is higher and the workshops run by Tecs and Local Authorities have led to much greater self-selection among potential applicants.

A big test for the department will be the take-up this year of Individual Learning Accounts. The Government will be making £150 a head available to 100,000 people from April. In return, those people must make a personal investment of

Labour's election campaign and the time has come to start delivering. A budget of £40 million has been allocated for the university, and an advisory board has been putting in place a three-year development plan.

Based in Sheffield, the university will aim to exploit the potential of information technology in general, and the Internet in particular, to produce a wide range of learning materials that people can easily gain access to at work or at home.

Money has been won from the European Union's Adapt scheme to fund the development projects, and the university should start to make its presence felt during the next two years.

Yet while pushing forward on these new fronts, Mr Mudie is still concerned to embed some developments from the previous administration. The increased take-up of National Vocational Qualifications, the new-style job qualifications launched a decade ago, is of continuing concern to him.

'She was so proud of her certificate that she put it up above where she worked'

September at first of the value of NVQs, he is now a supporter. "I was visiting a factory in Leeds and I met a young woman who had recently gained an NVQ. She was so proud of her achievement that she had framed the certificate and put it up above where she worked. It clearly meant a lot to her."

To achieve his ambitions for all these initiatives, Mr Mudie is keen to work with both the locally based Tecs and Local Authorities, and the recently established National Training Organisations.

"These are people who must work directly with employers to ensure that training continues to be a high priority," he says.

The significance of National Training Awards is that they provide real-life examples of what training can achieve. "I am fully behind NTAs," Mr Mudie says. "We must work to ensure that participation continues to grow."



An excellent training schedule, such as here at the Scunthorpe works, has enabled British Steel to be a regular winner of a National Training Award

Fighting spirit the perfect weapon



Steve Mercer: combined rubbish with finance

An ex-soldier is promoted from manual labour to management

During the four years he was in the Army, Steve Mercer acquired the skills and personal attributes of the professional soldier. When he got back to civvy street (straight from a tour of duty in Northern Ireland) he found the personal attributes stood him in good stead, even if he could not transfer the military skills. "At first I was unemployed," he explains. "It was frustrating, I felt I had the potential to develop a good career, but it was a question of finding the right opportunity."

Mr Mercer's story has been one of rags-to-riches as a National Training Awards individual winner. He got his first permanent civilian job ten years ago, collecting Christmas rubbish as part of the Rochdale Bor-

ough Council's direct services organisation.

"When I was interviewed for the job I told the manager that I wanted first to learn to drive the truck, then to be in charge of it and then to be promoted to management," he says. "He was amazed at my attitude, and then gave me a lot of support later on."

Through plenty of hard work, training and learning in his own time — plus the support of a sympathetic employer — Mr Mercer achieved his ambitions, and more. "After working all day I used to go to college to study finance, where I was alongside people who had been sitting comfort-

ably in their offices with their filofaxes while I was out collecting rubbish," he recalls.

Mr Mercer's resilience, a legacy from the Forces, paid off. He gained a supervisor's qualification, a Higher National Certificate in Business and Finance and various other qualifications, including a Diploma in Occupational Safety.

Meanwhile, he was being promoted at work and is now the manager responsible for health, safety and quality assurance of 1,300 staff.

His career advancement and learning success earned him a Supreme Winner Award in the National Training

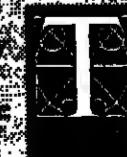
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NATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES LTD

Reforming adoption procedure

In re R (a Minor) (Inter-country adoptions: Practice)
Before Mrs Justice Bracewell
[Judgment January 13]

Alterations to current practice and procedures were clearly needed in order to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in inter-country adoptions and to prevent a repetition of the grave injustice to a child that had arisen in the instant case.

Mrs Justice Bracewell, sitting in the Family Division, said when dismissing the applicants' adoption application and making the child a ward of court while granting care and control to the applicants, making an order for contact with the natural family and ordering the applicants to allocate £30,000 to finance that future contact and to pay £20,000 in costs to the Official Solicitor.

Since making those orders she had heard argument on practice and procedure and was giving judgment in open court in order to provide guidelines for future management in respect of foreign country adoptions.

Although the judgment was delivered in open court, the case was heard in chambers and leave to report was given on the basis that the anonymity of the child, the parties and the location of the case would be preserved.

Miss Amanda Barrington-Smyth for the applicants; Mr Peter Jackson for the parents; Mr Peter Horrocks for the local authority; Miss Lisa Giovannetti for the Secretary of State for the Home Department; Mr Michael Stern for the guardian ad litem.

MRS JUSTICE BRACEWELL said that the child, AM, aged five, had come to the United Kingdom accompanied by one of the applicants.

The immigration officer, on being shown a single visit entry clearance issued in Bucharest and the limited purpose of a one-month holiday visit with parental consent, issued the standard six-month entry visa.

Although at that time Mrs R had denied any intent to adopt, the applicants subsequently gave notice under section 22 of the Adoption Act 1976 to the local authority that they intended to adopt AM and in 1995 issued an application to adopt which stated that the natural parents consented.

Under section 32 of the 1976 Act AM became a protected child. The Home Office allowed her to stay on for 12 months, then two years. Meanwhile the natural parents had eventually been contacted in August 1996 when they expressed their opposition to the adoption and demanded AM's return.

The Official Solicitor had been appointed in October 1995 when

the case was transferred to the High Court. He first met the parents in 1998. By that time the Home Secretary had intervened to oppose the adoption application.

Having listed the current legitimate procedures, her Ladyship said that she had two principal concerns.

The first was the question of delay: the child, aged five, had arrived in this country from Romania on August 15, 1994 and her future was not determined until December 2, 1998, over four years later. The problem to be addressed was the need to prevent passage of time determining placement.

The second concern was the suppression of truth: the statutory scheme for the protection of children in inter-country adoptions did not result in the true facts being revealed until the hearing was actually in progress. The problem to be addressed was the use of effective procedure and guidelines to deter British citizens from embarking on illegal adoption activities.

Comparing with proper procedures minimised the risk of injustice, providing a firm foundation for a child's future and a clear history of the past disregard of the procedures deprived children of protection, almost inevitably involved criminal offences under sections 11 and 57 of the 1976 Act, might well involve immigration control offences, were generally accompanied by lies and dishonesty and led to complex, expensive and emotionally charged legal proceedings with prominent abuses including unsuitable carers, disregard for parental rights, trafficking in children and intolerable delay.

Applicants

The crucial matter of principle was the duty of full and frank disclosure. As Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division, had said in the Court of Appeal in *Oxfordshire County Council v M* [1994] Fam 1 S 16:

"Children's cases are to be regarded as being in a special category ... Relevant information should be made available to the court in order that it can arrive at a conclusion which is fair and just in the interests of the welfare of the child."

That applied with special force to applicants in inter-country adoptions as they were usually the only parties with full knowledge of all the facts.

The Home Office

On permitting entry to non-European Union citizens the standard practice was to grant permission for a six-month stay, thereafter no checks of any kind were made to see whether the individual had left the jurisdiction.

That was a serious failure of responsibility which enabled people to disappear from view and could

only operate to encourage law-breaking.

Where a child of non-European Union origin arrived accompanied by a non-related adult, the child should be permitted entry only with written parental consent, for the minimum period necessary not the conventional six months.

Within 72 hours the Home Office should inform the Department of Health and the local authority's social services should be informed within 72 hours thereafter so that the child could be treated as a privately fostered child within the terms of section 67 of the Children Act 1991.

If the Home Office was notified that the parents did not consent to the child's presence here the child should be deported immediately.

Department of Health

The Department of Health should take on the role of coordinating policy and actively inquire into steps being taken by the local authority.

The department knew of AM's presence in November 1994 but took no action, nor had it responded to the Official Solicitor's letter in August 1996.

The local authority

Once the local authority had learned of AM's presence in 1994 it had a duty to identify itself and welfare needs be better protected. In the event that the authority failed to discharge its duties to AM, either as a privately fostered child or as a child in need under section 17 of the 1991 Act.

On receipt of notification of a child in AM's position the local authority should have a pivotal role. It should consider the matter at director level and seek legal advice, attempting to contact the natural parents immediately to seek clarification of the child's status.

If not satisfied, it should consider proceedings under Part IV and V of the 1991 Act and, if an adoption application was issued, the local authority should ascertain if that intention had been disclosed to the immigration officer.

If not, it should apply for the case to be transferred to the High Court and listed as a matter of urgency for directions and investigation.

The court

Under section 6 of the 1976 Act the court had a duty to consider all the circumstances, primarily the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

In this case the county court took no decision of any significance for three years, no guardian ad litem was appointed for nine months, the natural parents were not made parties to the proceedings.

As a stark illustration of progress, up until February 1998 the court had eight documents; by

November 1998 the court bundle ran to 600 pages.

In foreign adoption cases the court need to be vigilant at all times to ensure proper investigation.

Upon receipt of an adoption application the court should draw up a precise time-table and applicants should be required to file an affidavit in advance setting out all the circumstances, including parental consent.

All parties should be required to attend, the Home Office should send a knowledgeable representative to the hearings, cross-examination should be permitted, the court should never accept untranslated documents, and directions should include personal service on the natural parents.

It appeared that the parents had never consented in writing to an adoption then the court should transfer the case to the High Court, consider summary dismissal, invite the Official Solicitor to make the child a ward of court and order the return of the child to the natural parents. Should the case continue the court should keep a close eye on all matters.

This case demonstrated, in particular, that rule 21 of the Adoption Rules [SI 1994 No 265] did not impart sufficient urgency in listing non-agency inter-country adoptions and further consideration might be appropriate in respect of *Practice Direction (Inter-country adoptions: Transfer of proceedings)* [1994] 1 WLR 13) regarding transfers between the county court and the High Court.

Guardian ad litem

The guardian ad litem had a duty to investigate, particularly in cases such as this where the applicants had already been rejected as potential adopters and a child of theirs had been in voluntary care, and seek to represent the child's best interests.

The importance of speedy contact with the child's natural family should be recognised.

Here the Official Solicitor was appointed as guardian in 1995 and did not report until three years later.

Furthermore, all agencies should inform the police if there were suspicions that criminal offences had been committed.

In conclusion, her Ladyship directed that a copy of the transcript of the judgment be provided to the Department of Health, the Home Office and the Lord Chancellor's Department to try to prevent any repetition of the grave injustice that had been done to the child in this case.

Solicitors: Pro Bono Unit; Mishcon de Reya; Solicitor for the local authority; Treasury Solicitor; Official Solicitor.

LORD JUSTICE PETER GIBSON said that the taxpayer company had not entitled to allocate to its foreign income only so much of any charges on income as would leave the corporation tax otherwise payable on that foreign income equal to or offset by double taxation relief, thereby producing an excess of charges on income capable of being carried forward to a subsequent accounting period.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment dismissing the appeal of the taxpayer company, Commercial Union Assurance Co plc, against the dismissal by Mr Justice Harman in the Chancery Division on February 20, 1998 of its appeal against corporation tax assessments for each accounting period between 1984 and 1991 and against the refusal to allow it to carry forward losses in respect of the last three of those accounting periods [1998] STC 360].

Mr Graham Aaronson, QC and Mr Malcolm Gardiner, for the taxpayer company, Mr Ian Giese, QC, and Mr Jonathan Peacock for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE PETER GIBSON

said that the corporation tax legislation required, first, the ascertainment of income from a particular source and chargeable gains, as reduced by any relief applicable to income from that source or those gains; then the ascertainment of the total profits by aggregating the income from the various sources and the gains, reduced by any relief applicable to those total profits, and once the amount of the net total profits had been ascertained the corporation tax prima facie chargeable on the total profits and offset by double taxation relief.

In His Lordship's judgment, section 338(1) did not assist the taxpayer because double taxation relief was not a relief from tax which could be claimed, but was a credit to be allowed against UK tax, in the present case corporation tax see [1998] STC 360].

Hence it was only the foreign tax which was relieved at a rate equal to or greater than the corporation tax rate on that income of profits which were deductible, not against which they had been allocated as deductions.

Section 392(9) did not permit the carry forward of charges on income which were less than the amount of the taxpayer company's profits against which they were deductible.

Consistently with that section

797(3) did not permit a company to allocate to profits a deduction greater than the amount necessary to reduce those profits to nothing.

As the General Commissioners had said: "the deduction to be made for charges on income in section 797(3) cannot be greater than the profits from which those charges are deductible ... which may be allocated to any category of profits is a sum of charges on income up to but not exceeding the amount of that category of profits ... Thus section 797(3)(b) directs that the relevant income or gain shall be reduced on a pro rata basis, something that is effected by allocation of a sum not exceeding that income or gain" [1998] STC 360, 394].

What the taxpayer had done was impermissible. In short, the deduction had to be fully utilised before double taxation relief was taken.

The Master of the Rolls and Lord Justice Brooke agreed.

Solicitors: Linklaters & Paines; Solicitor, Inland Revenue.

Law Report January 20 1999

Court of Appeal

Allocating foreign income for tax

Commercial Union Assurance Co plc v Shaw (Inspector of Taxes)

Before Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls; Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Brooke [Judgment December 21]

A company was not entitled to allocate to its foreign income only so much of any charges on income as would leave the corporation tax otherwise payable on that foreign income equal to or offset by double taxation relief, thereby producing an excess of charges on income capable of being carried forward to a subsequent accounting period.

The taxpayer had submitted, first, that double taxation relief came within the words "other relief from tax" in section 350(1) so that the total profits had to be treated as reduced by double taxation relief.

Second, it had relied on the fact that it was entitled to use its power of allocation under section 797(3) to allocate charges on income in such amounts and to such of its profits as could be reduced only for the double taxation relief credit.

in so far as the foreign tax on any relevant income was levied at a rate less than the corporation tax rate on that income the company's total profits were not reduced either in some economic sense or at all.

II. UK corporation tax was levied at 35 per cent and the foreign tax was levied at 30 per cent on foreign income, that income was not relieved from corporation tax but double taxation relief caused the corporation tax on that income to be levied at only 5 per cent.

Hence it was only the foreign tax which was relieved at a rate equal to or greater than the corporation tax prima facie chargeable on the total profits and that the economic effect of double taxation relief might be said to be the same as if the total profits were reduced by the relevant income.

But double taxation relief was not expressed to operate by reducing taxable profits and the language of section 338(1) did not suggest that one was required to look at the economic effect of double taxation relief which was capable of being carried forward to a subsequent accounting period.

The taxpayer's first submission turned on the meaning of the words of section 338(1) allowing charges on income as deductions against the total profits for the period as reduced by any other relief from tax other than group relief.

In His Lordship's judgment, section 338(1) did not assist the taxpayer because double taxation relief was not a relief from tax which could be claimed, but was a credit to be allowed against UK tax, in the present case corporation tax see [1998] STC 360].

Mr Graham Aaronson, QC and Mr Malcolm Gardiner, for the taxpayer company, Mr Ian Giese, QC, and Mr Jonathan Peacock for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE PETER GIBSON

said that the corporation tax legislation required, first, the ascertainment of a particular source in relation to bus stops sites which the council themselves maintained, and sites where no consents as yet were given, and entered into an agreement with J. D. C. Deacon, UK Ltd.

The company were granted the exclusive right for 25 years to install bus shelters on highway land within the council's area, except those provided and maintained under existing section 104 powers.

Under the agreement the company stated that if the council was able to provide them with access to the section 104 sites they would erect replacement shelters on those sites and provide the council with other benefits. The council then purported to revoke the section 104 consent and London Transport challenged the decision.

Mr Justice Holgate held so in the Queen's Bench Division when dismissing an application for judicial review of the decision of the community and environment committee of Hillingdon London Borough Council on February 11, 1998, given effect to by notice dated April 24, 1998, to purify or revoke the section 104 consent and further, required London Regional Transport to remove the bus shelters which were subject to the revocation.

MR JUSTICE HOLGATE said that Mr Superstone was correct

(sections 402(1) and 403(1)) and disclaims on discounted bills of exchange (section 78(2)).

In the latter category were advance corporation tax (sections 250(1) and (2) and 197(4)) and double taxation relief. As was said in section 793(1), the amount of UK taxes chargeable in respect of any income or chargeable gain would be reduced by the amount of the double taxation relief credit.

in so far as the foreign tax on any relevant income was levied at a rate less than the corporation tax rate on that income the company's total profits were not reduced either in some economic sense or at all.

II. UK corporation tax was levied at 35 per cent and the foreign tax was levied at 30 per cent on foreign income, that income was not relieved from corporation tax but double taxation relief caused the corporation tax on that income to be levied at only 5 per cent.

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But double taxation relief was not expressed to operate by reducing taxable profits and the language of section 338(1) did not suggest that one was required to look at the economic effect of double taxation relief which was capable of being carried forward to a subsequent accounting period.

The taxpayer's first submission turned on the meaning of the words of section 797(3)(a) on a company to allocate to profits a deduction greater than the amount necessary to reduce those profits to nothing.

That the corporation tax legislation required, first, the ascertainment of a particular source in relation to bus stops sites which the council themselves maintained, and sites where no consents as yet were given, and entered into an agreement with J. D. C. Deacon, UK Ltd.

The effect of the allocation, it had said, was to reveal the amount of foreign income relieved from tax by the maximum permitted double taxation relief. That was the purpose of section 797(3).

His Lordship was not persuaded that the allocation was being carried forward to a subsequent accounting period as if it was a deduction for the purposes of section 797(3) or of any other local authority.

Solicitors: Miss Katherine Thomas; Hillingdon; Miss Linda Paterson; Linklaters & Paines.

Bus shelter consent not irrevocable

Regina v Hillingdon London Borough Council, Ex parte London Regional Transport

Before Mr Justice Holgate

[Judgment December 18]

The giving of consent by a local authority to erect and maintain bus shelters on highway land within the council's area, under section 104 of the London Transport Passenger Act 1994, was a continuous consent subject to withdrawal by the local authority, and not an irrevocable once and for all consent.

The defendants had argued that it would be sufficient to comply with the second sub-paragraph only, as the sub



POP

ARTS

THEATRE

Hits and
misses at the
Mime Festival

PAGE 35



All was fair in a love like a war

Anand Tucker, the director of *Hilary and Jackie*, has a background in documentaries. And although he and the writer Frank Cottrell Boyce painstakingly researched their feature film about the relationship between Hilary du Pré and her famous cellist sister Jacqueline, who was struck down by multiple sclerosis at the height of her career, as thoroughly as any factual documentary, Tucker makes what might seem a startling admission.

"There's no such thing as the truth," he says. "It doesn't exist. What there is is this side of the story and that side and probably 20 more sides. Films are very simple things. Lives are very complicated. Our film is a *tiny* story about two extraordinary women. Everyone else, they're like satellites revolving around these two powerful forces."

The film and the book, *A Genius in the Family*, Hilary and Piers du Pré's memoir of life with their sister from which the film draws much of its material, actually grew side-by-side as separate entities. Tucker saw a four-page treatment of the book before it had been written and from that decided this was a story he wanted to film.

"I'd had no idea of the depth of suffering that Jackie had been through," he says. "Nor of the incredible power of this relationship that she had had with her sister and the extraordinary sacrifice that Hilary made for Jackie out of love — huge, epic, unbelievable things that moved me to my very heart. I felt I just had to make the film."

The sacrifice referred to is the revelation, which caused such a stir when the du Pré's book was published in 1997, of Jackie's apparently bizarre demand at one point in their lives; with which her sister concurred, for sexual relations with Hilary's husband. For

CINEMA: Portraying Jacqueline du Pré's life was painful for director Anand Tucker. Carol Allen reports

Tucker that apparently monstrous situation was the core of the story. "What the story's about is unconditional love. Is that possible and how far can you push that? There's one person in the world who loves you no matter what, in this case your sister. You lose her and then you find her again, that's the story that made me cry."

Having read the treatment, Tucker and Cottrell Boyce met the du Prés, heard their experiences first-hand, and then spent the next year researching their material, interviewing family, friends, colleagues and tutors who had known Hilary and Jackie, looking for the way to transfer their vision to the screen.

"What I've always done with anyone I've ever made a film about," says Tucker, "is to say: 'You've seen my work. I've told you the film I want to make; you have to decide whether you can trust me or not. The film I will make is not your story. It will be my version. If you want a truthful and accurate representation of your life, go away and do it yourself. Don't let me make your film.' They looked me in the eye; they trusted me, in the same way that I had to decide whether I trusted them or not. That's all you can ever do."

One person who refused to be interviewed or take part in any way was Jackie's husband, Daniel Barenboim. He

said, "I want to make you the star, not just with regard to the incident involving the husband, but in terms of her dominance of the family and apparently unreasonable and childish behaviour. Although much of this becomes explicable and even sympathetic in the third part, as we see her loneliness and insecurity as a young woman and then the terrifying onset of her illness, it is inevitably based on surmise and imagination. Jacqueline du Pré is not here to speak for herself."

"But what we have is the music," Tucker points out. "I don't mean to be pretentious

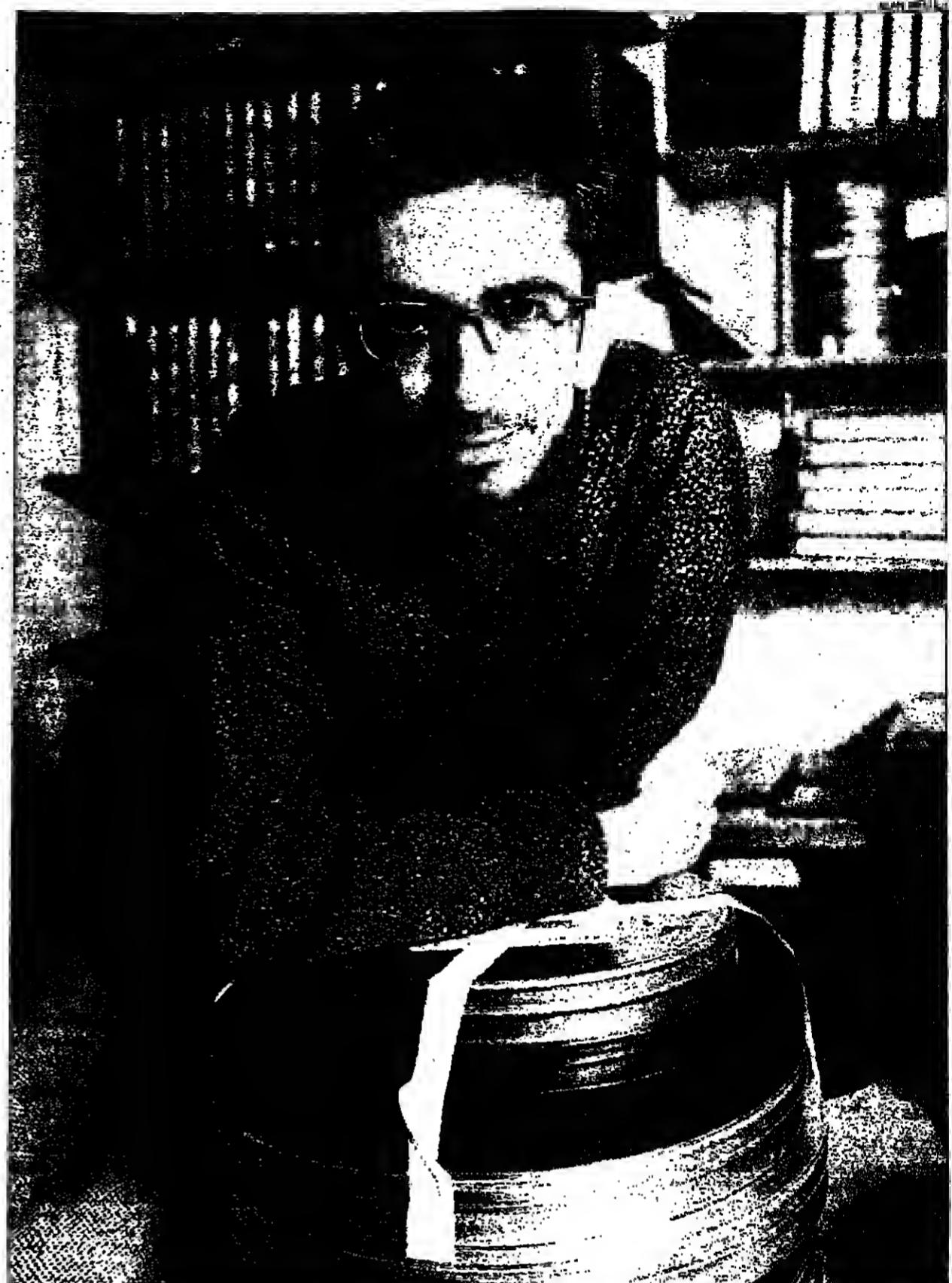
about this but actually the music speaks to you. You cannot be untruthful to that — the fear, despair, pain, anguish, love, sorrow, all that is in her musical voice, that's why the music lives."

Some of the most painful scenes in the film are inevitably those involving the destruction of Jackie's talent and existence by her illness. To gain insight into this Tucker and Emily Watson, who plays Jackie, spent time with other MS sufferers. "The one thing that characterises all of them is anger," says Tucker.

"Some people have got upset because she's shown as being difficult in the film, because Jacqueline du Pré has always been an icon. In a way it's been almost too painful for people to contemplate the reality of this beautiful, golden girl being struck down by this disease. But the truth of it was, she raged against the dying of the light, rather than sitting meekly in a corner, wasting away and being saintly. She was furious and desperate and she was pretty awful but that's because she was so angry and I think that needs honouring."

In the Hilary section of the story, Jackie often appears monstrous, not just with regard to the incident involving the husband, but in terms of her dominance of the family and apparently unreasonable and childish behaviour. Although much of this becomes explicable and even sympathetic in the third part, as we see her loneliness and insecurity as a young woman and then the terrifying onset of her illness, it is inevitably based on surmise and imagination. Jacqueline du Pré is not here to speak for herself."

• Hilary and Jackie opens on Friday.



Anand Tucker: "I always say, if you want a truthful and accurate representation of your life, go away and do it yourself!"

MUSIC: Richard Morrison previews a disturbing TV documentary about instrumentalists

Orchestra pours out tale of woe



Philharmonia players may do 600 sessions a year to survive

You surely must be road, brave or colossally vain to allow a fly-on-the-wall television crew into your workplace. Especially if your workplace is the arts, a field rich in pretension and pomposity, just made for the deadpan mockery of the roving cameras.

Think how comprehensively the Royal Opera House management was shamed by *The House*. Or how a bunch of newspaper critics, several of them quite bright and well-adjusted chaps, naively allowed themselves to be stitched up on Channel 4 last year.

Message received and understood? Clearly not. Starting this Sunday on Channel 4, *The Phil* goes behind the scenes of the Philharmonia as it struggles to stay afloat in London's murky orchestral pond. True, this is no *House*-style hatchet job. There are no slippery PRs or odious mega-egos unwittingly digging themselves into large holes here. What we see is something much sadder: a mostly sympathetic portrayal of gifted people who have become disenchanted and debilitated by the grinding process of being a classical musician in a seemingly hostile world.

WHATEVER the reason for the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's full house — the participation of not only Sakari Oramo but also of his wife Anni Komsu, and the attractions of the new hall in the CBSO Centre — it was probably not anything exceptional about the programme itself. It is true that Kurtág's *Messages of the late Miss R.V. Troussouw* is approaching the status of a contemporary classic and that anything by Magnus Lindberg is an interesting prospect. But most of the concert, as at most events of this kind, had to be taken on trust.

So it is an indication of the success that BCMG has had with its commissions over the long term that the thought of hearing two more of them was no deterrent. This time the BCMG got it at least half right. Bent Sørensen's *Sinful Songs*, with its 14 instrumentalists distributed along the sides of the hall as well as across the front, looked more interesting than it actually turned out to be. It has very little substance to it: no arresting material, no evident structural purpose beyond spin-

Climactic in many ways

ning out sounds over a given period. Certainly, there are no songs and the only angular sin is durational — which is not in the deadly sinful category although, if the piece had gone on a moment or two longer, it might well have qualified.

Sinful Songs is a title that could have

been applied to the other new work in the programme. Alastair Greig's *Play*, here a composer with a strong lyrical instinct but one which he is apparently reluctant to indulge. *Play* is based, he says, on the interplay of two contrasting melodic lines that run through its five sections. But it is not until well into the second of them, where a solo flute occupies the attention, that Greig actually allows a line to take a fully coherent shape. The real interest of the piece, which is skillfully and attractive

ly written for a large ensemble, is in observing the varying degrees of freedom allowed to the linear impulse before it expresses in a quiet but dramatically conceived ending.

While it would have been a pity to lose either John Woolrich's witty articulated *Lending Wings* (a BCMG commission from ten years ago) or Lindberg's refreshingly direct *Corrente I*, it was unfortunate that the concert overran the standard time. Apart from the fact that less is better than more in a programme of largely unfamiliar music, there was the usual problem of members of the audience making their exits during the last item. For those who did not have to go, and who were not distracted by those who did, Komsu's performance of *Messages of the late Miss R.V. Troussouw*, beautifully sung in general and impressively faked in the noted organs of the second section, was an experience that made most of the rest seem trivial in comparison.

GERALD LARNER

leged to observe the Philharmonia and other London orchestras on tour. I know these players still love music. They wouldn't play with such passion otherwise; nor would they stand the hours. They can also be wickedly funny; that's what keeps them sane.

Why, then, did they agree to make these programmes and then suppress their joy and wit? Perhaps because they are desperate. Right at the end of the last programme, the Philharmonia's managing director, David Whelton, announced quite calmly that he doesn't believe that orchestras like the Philharmonia will exist in Britain 15 years from now. To judge by their mood in this series, few of his players would disagree with that bleak view. They seem exhausted by the baton, by the way of explanation.

But that isn't really the reason. I have often been privi-

Novelty still wild at fifty

CONCERT

Messiaen Festival Barbićan/Radio 3

was the third movement's melting dialogue with the clarinet clear proof in Jeanne Loriod's hands that the instrument can produce more than extra-terrestrial mating calls or the sound of a vacuum cleaner being switched on.

We were also helped by hearing the piece alongside its companions in Messiaen's trilogy inspired by the Tristan legend. *Turangalila* was pre-faced bright and clear. The ondes marinette's moment of glory

os especially radiant. In the afternoon, accompanied by Iain Burnside, Susan Bullock's dramatic soprano shook St Giles' Church with *Harawi* (1945), a chain of lullabies, Inca dances and celestial visions. In all three Messiaen celebrates the love that leaps over death towards cosmic joy, and it was revealing to hear related impulses cloaked in different guises. For the vocal works, Messiaen used invented words, phrases echoing the Tristan and Orpheus legends, throat clicks and shrieks: very effective in their way, though they made one grateful that *Turangalila* had no words beyond its tide — a Sanskrit word fusing the concepts of time, movement, love, life and death.

The afternoon concert also featured *Quartet for the End of Time*, which he wrote in 1940 as a prisoner of war. This is big music writ large, with an impassioned cello and repeated piano chords conjuring emotions that *Turangalila* is too loud and crazy to reach. All soloists performed well, but the cellist Paul Watkins was exemplary. All told, a wonderful day.

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

MIME FESTIVAL

Lorca's life and loves

GREAT BRITISH HOPESRising stars in the arts firmament:
PARMINDER K. NAGRAge. 23.
profession: Actress.

FORAY for Bollywood: The most recent in a string of acclaimed performances with companies such as Tamasha and Tara Arts came when she played a reluctant bride in *Fourteen Songs, Two Weddings & a Funeral*, an adaptation of a popular Bollywood musical, at the Eric Hammersmith last November. One critic singled her out as "a deliciously skiffl" romantic comedienne. "The whole kitsch, cheezyie of that show was great fun."

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME: A classic ombiz lucky break enabled her to sign up her Equity card within months of completing her A levels: was a week into rehearsals for *The Spirit of Wringavan*, a new British Asian musical at Leicester Haymarket, when the lead actress dropped out. The director offered her the part and I grabbed it."

ROSS CASTING: Her first London job as as the Princess in *Sleeping Beauty* at the Theatre Royal Stratford East. "I was really shocked when a TV interviewer asked me what it's like being an Asian Sleeping Beauty? I was very naive, and had never occurred to me that aving an Asian playing a traditionally white role, especially in a pantomime, was something unusual!"

YING PAYS: "In 1995, at the end of really bad six months, I went to an audition for *Casualty*. I was taking 'All my friends are at university and getting on well, so what shall I do with my life?' I started crying at the end of the audition, and the director said, 'If you can do that, you can have the part'."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

Men of letters are wordless

Three of the shows taking part in this year's International Mime Festival explore the reputations of literary folk. The most ambitious of the three, *I Weep At My Piano* (BAC), also brings in the artist Dalí and the film-maker Buñuel, but Federico García Lorca is the man at the heart of it — in love with one of the other of them, and repulsed by both.

This show has a lot going for it. The producing company is Told By An Idiot, leaders in physical theatre, two of its founder members are involved in the production. Paul Hunter as director and the brilliant Hayley Carmichael playing a girlishly boyish Lorca.

Naoimí Wilkinson's fascinating set includes a high platform pierced by a tree, iron balconies and ladders. Richard Clews and Stephen Harper are accomplished as the gurning Buñuel and bald-Dalí.

Yet the production, framed within the scene of Lorca's murder, neither builds logically towards this point nor indicates persuasively what bound the three together in their sudden days.

They bark about a bit and tell merrily blasphemous tales. The others sneer at Lorca for his gypsy poetry, abandon him with contempt and reappear to march him to his death. There are moments of humour but no indication that Lorca was anything more substantial than a sweet puppy.

Nor does the substance of Max Jacob's life emerge precisely in *Faces of the Night* (CA) but all we need to grasp is that this French Surrealist writer and Catholic convert was haunted by demons.

Everybody Gets The Demons They Deserve is the show's subtitle, which sounds neat but

cannot be true: not even the most guilt-ridden Jew deserves

MIME FESTIVAL

add to the sense of nightmare.

But for traditional mime (i.e.

mimicry without words) building with inventive comedy,

watch out for future appearances of Paolo Nani's *The Letter* (BAC and Purcell Room).

Nani, directed by Nullo Faccioli,

has drawn on *Exercises in Style*, the ingenious book by Raymond Queneau that reports a banal encounter in more than a hundred different ways. Nani's version brings him on stage to a table where he drinks a glass of wine, spits it out, grimaces at a photograph, writes an angry letter, goes off to post it and discovers his pen was out of ink.Every detail of this scenario figures in the 15 or so variations Nani gives us. He uncorks the bottle twice in *Repetition*, rolls his eyes at the wonder of uncorking in *Surprises*, puts bottle to mouth in *Vulgar*, after drinking it in *Horror* turns into Frankenstein's Monster. There is a sense of being trapped in an endless loop where life is always the same yet never the same and increasingly hysterical.

JEREMY KINGSTON

ARTS

Getting physical: Hayley Carmichael plays a girlishly boyish Lorca with Richard Clews as a guitar-playing Buñuel in *I Weep At My Piano* at BAC

In control of chaos

If any company were going to kill off mine's namby-pamby flower-sniffing associations once and for all, it had to be the Russian clown troupe Dervco. Picture a gang of Millwall supporters dressed in toyshop Dracula kit and wielding a packet of dried figs and you are getting close. Add to that a moderate sprinkling of pyrotechnics, the grace and musculature of an Olympic kick-boxing squad and the behavioural tendencies of a host of angels out on a hen night and you might just be able to imagine their performance.

Even though their latest show *Once* sees them making cute, the ominous cloud still hangs low above the Queen Elizabeth Hall stage: you can't shake the feeling that something, somewhere is going horribly wrong.

Yet *Once* is a surprisingly playful sortie into the world of clowning. It follows the amorous fortunes of a caffeinating Betty Boop character as she is courted by both a raunchy clown and a

sinister aristocrat. As can be divined from the title of the show, this is a voyage into the land of fairytales, most of which appear in the mind of the clown as he dreams alternately of wooing his dolly bird and the terrible misfortunes that will befall her if she accepts his rival's suit.

While the narrative teeters permanently on the brink of incomprehensible but oh-so-aesthetic chaos, what really makes *Once* special is the combination of outstanding physical characterisations and an uncanny skill for hoochcocking across genres. It would be easy to command individual performances, but any member of the cast could have played any of the other characters with similar aplomb, regardless of gender.

In Once, character springs from a series of minutely observed physicalities, stuck on to the raw human fabric like sequins of personality. Betty Boop wiggles eloquently. Cupid stoops in embarrassment and dreams of becoming St Sebastian. The onstage atmosphere can change in an instant from Casablanca to Carnival. This is an exceptional piece of theatre from a company at the height of its powers.

HETTIE JUDAH

Women get fresh

THEATRE

Valentine's Day: a flatshare in London. Undiscovered everywhere, and centre-stage a huge, half-naked chocolate cake. Out on to the stage pads Dana (Sophia Ashen) in yeti slippers, picks up the paper, throws away the sports section, settles snugly down. In staggers Helen (Jane Colenutt), a postprandial mess, trying to eat cake, down pankillers and locate clothes all at once, only to reappear in power suit and perma-smile. We're in twenty-first-century territory.

COLD FEET AND WET TOES (Finborough, SW10) is a new two-hander, also written by Ashen and Colenutt. It is a bittersweet tale of lost illusions, narrowing choices and enduring friendship. Dana is the sensible one, an overworked doctor with a serious boyfriend, scared of being single but absolutely hysterical at the prospect of marriage — all supermarket loyal-

cards and no fun, she shudders. Helen is the wild child, PR bitch from hell by day, vulnerable good-time girl by night. Both are suffering from premature midlife crises.

Dowdled with their stories are those of their fiftysomething counterparts, Helen's mother Andrea (Ashen) and her friend Rose (Colenutt). Andrea is on her fourth divorce and determined to celebrate with a freedom party, at which she steals her daughter's new flame. Primly suburban Rose has all but given up, unwisely resorting to a dodgy dating agency to her from singleness.

Finding your way through life is a never-ending task, then: the script offers no more startling insight. With innumerable short and sometimes sammy scenes, it is also slightly too long. But the pleasure is in the details. Funny and fresh, raunchy and rude, the sassy dialogue is peppered with the buzz-words of affluent urbanites.

Ashen and Colenutt deliver charming performances, and director Alison Brown gets the pace just right, sided by Gabriella Csanyi-Wills's minimalist but effective set. Familiar it may be, but it's a superior sort of sitcom.

NIGEL CLIFF

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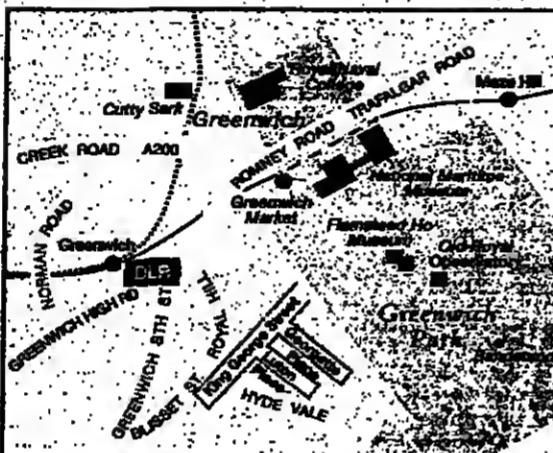
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Rachmans need not apply

Letting a property will soon be less complicated thanks to a new scheme, says Rachel Kelly

Successive British housing ministers have faced the same challenge for the past decade: how to revive the private rented sector. It is a peculiarity of our housing market that the private rented sector is one in which relationships between landlords and tenants are often fraught, making this sector smaller in the UK than elsewhere.

A scheme launched this week should help to ease that tension, reduce the need for development of the green belt and cut down the number of empty properties.

Hilary Armstrong, the Housing Minister, said at the inauguration of the National Approved Letting Scheme (NALS): "The lettings industry has suffered from poor image; we want this scheme to work so that cowboy outfits know their time is coming to an end. There are many good, private landlords and this scheme will ensure their rights are respected and upheld."

Ted Watts, chairman of Empty Homes Agency (EHA), the housing charity that will administer the letting scheme, said: "The scheme will increase incomes of property owners, reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for the homeless, reduce the need for greenfield development and reduce the level of crime by having fewer empty properties."

The main difference between the new scheme and the present arrangements is a three-stage complaints-redress system, and ultimately an independent arbitration service if landlords are unhappy with their letting agent.

Tenants may use the internal complaints procedure and mediation if they are unhappy with the letting agent, but only landlords are eligible to proceed to the arbitration scheme if a complaint is not amicably resolved. The other difference is one of degree. This is a detailed code of practice which will enforce higher standards.

At least 3,000 of the 13,000 letting agents working in the sector are likely to join up because they are members of the professional bodies that have backed the scheme. It is hoped



that the other 10,000 will sign up, at a cost of £120 plus VAT when consumers begin to demand the higher standards of NALS agents.

Simon Agate, chairman of Winkworth, London's largest chain of agents, says he will instruct all his franchisees to join. "Of course, the independent professional bodies have codes of practice for letting agents, but this is different. It is more forceful and more user-friendly. It is entirely new. It will change the marketplace."

There is nothing in the scheme that can do anything about tenants who never intend to pay rent and the misery of landlords chasing their rent through the courts. But the extra care that the code imposes on agents to interview prospective tenants should help to eliminate some of the worst offenders. Nor can the scheme deal with problems arising from rent paid by the Department of Health and Social Security. Local authorities can withhold money from agents to the fury of

landlords, many of whom have refused to let their properties to social security tenants. Conversely, tenants will be reassured by the knowledge that NALS agents will manage the tenancy professionally by applying standards contained within the scheme.

But the Government's backing will help those who doubt a Labour Government's commitment to a vibrant private rented sector. Their fears were heightened before Christmas when Ms Armstrong an-

nounced plans to limit increases for Britain's 250,000 fair rent tenants by applying a formula linked to the retail prices index.

Her move dismayed some of the existing landlords and bodies such as the British Property Federation, which argued against such interference in an open market. However, regulatory tenancies are a small part of the market — many are elderly and no new regulatory tenancies are being created. The letting scheme is aimed at the mainstream market

and not the sector affected by the proposed rent controls.

At the launch of the scheme at the Royal Society of Arts, Ms Armstrong reaffirmed the Government's commitment to assured shorthold tenancies, the main vehicle for letting, which has done most to reinvigorate the sector, and her commitment to the private rented sector in general. The scheme should prove a welcome successor to the assured shorthold tenancies and reinforce their success.

A FLAT in Palace Court, Notting Hill, W2, which was home to the Duchess of York last summer, is available to rent. The four-bedroom house dating back to 1889 makes the perfect stop-over for the seasonal traveller; it is close to the new Heathrow shuttle service and yet is still near the heart of Notting Hill. The flat is for rent through Cluttons Daniel Smith Hyde Park office for £2,700 a week.

■SIR Evelyn de Rothschild, chairman of N M Rothschild & Sons, one of the world's oldest independent financial institutions, has bought 6 Cheyne Walk for £12 million.

■A HOUSE designed by Robert Luyens, the son of Sir Edwin Luyens, is for sale. Ridgehead House in Englefield Green, Surrey, was commissioned by Captain Wool Barnato in 1938. The design of the house and gardens is in the Spanish Mission style. Captain Barnato drove for the Bentley Motors Racing Team in the 1920s and won at Le Mans in 1928, 1929 and 1930 in the Speed Six. He became the chairman of Bentley Motors before it was taken over by Rolls-Royce in 1931. Knight Frank is selling the house for £2 million.

■VISCOUNT LINLEY is selling his house on the Caribbean island of Mustique. Les Jolies Eaux was designed in 1971 for Princess Margaret by Linley's great-uncle Oliver Messel. In 1988 the Princess gave the six-bedroom home to her son, Stuart N. Siegal, the president and managing director of Sotheby's International Realty, which is marketing the property. says: "The house is a casual retreat with an important heritage of ownership and design." The house is on offer for £2.6 million.

■A CONVERTED watermill in East Anglia is the first property in Britain to be offered for sale exclusively in euros. The owner is a former City oil trader. The mill, built in 1814, is set in an acre of watermeadow and has been refurbished. The house is for sale for £700,000.

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Carl Evans on a promising point-to-point trainer

Dalton making rapid strides through ranks

Strike-rates have become a fashionable assessment of a trainer's worth, which makes the winners-to-runners ratio of point-to-point trainer Heather Dalton worth noting.

Mrs Dalton, based near Telford, in Shropshire, saddled 22 winners from 33 runners last season and also recorded five seconds, two thirds and two fourths. That is a strike-rate to be proud of in any sport at any grade and there are few easy races at present in the competitive business of point-to-pointing.

Little wonder people are comparing Dalton to her friend, Venetia Williams. Some well-known owners have taken note too and have placed their young stock under her care. John Hales, forever to be associated with One Man, has sent her a five-year-old half-brother to the famous grey, while Alan Brazier and bloodstock agent David Minion are two others who have enjoyed success under Rules and now patronise her yard.

They also gain in having a champion to partner their horses in races — Dalton's success helped her husband, Andrew, become joint-national champion last season with 33 wins, a figure matched by Herefordshire's Julian Pritchard.

This time last year Mrs Dalton, 32, was about to embark on her third season as a five-yard proprietor and had 11 horses under her care. Now her string numbers 24, expectations are high and numerous young horses are undergoing a course in excellence at an academy where their mental attitude is considered as important as fitness.

"We are careful not to run horses when they are not right," Dalton said, while reflecting on her success. "We get a lot worked out before we get anywhere near the racecourse."

Comparisons with Miss Williams do not faze her — they both rode as amateurs and worked together for former trainer John Edwards. "We don't get much time to chat, but I phone her when she has a winner and I admire



Dalton with Shoon Wind, ridden by her husband, Andrew, at their Shropshire farm

what she has achieved," Dalton said.

She knows many people expect her to be taking on her friend before long, but said: "I have no plans yet to train under Rules, but I don't say it will never happen."

Attention to detail and a near-painful search for the best in each horse drives her forward, helped by her husband and his sister, Lorna, whose unofficial role as assistant trainer is vital. They speak her yard where horses get the best available.

Rugs look as though they have just been unwrapped — tack shines and stables sparkle — not surprising since

many have just been built. Demand for a place at the yard is outstripping her ability to get staff, but she copes by working late into the night, juggling her role as mum to a three-year-old daughter with being marron to a yard of mainly young horses. Their good manners under saddle are a notable aspect of this nation.

"We do have a lot of young horses and they are susceptible to all sorts of problems, but I like training them, bringing them through and teaching them to use themselves properly," she said. "We spend time putting them through their paces on the flat so they develop and use their bodies."

Solba, an ex-chaser who won six times for the yard last season and has become an ambassador for his trainer, is fit and ready to run again while the evergreen Shoon Wind, now 16, is sleek in coat and looking half his age.

At the other end of the age range, watch out for the five-year-olds, Azzante and Aztodi, this season, while Oh So Droll, O'Flaherty's and Garrison King are others to note.

Point-to-pointing has given National Hunt racing a stream of talent recently, mostly in the form of young jockeys and horses, but Mrs Dalton could one day emerge as a formidable trainer.

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Richard Dunwoody, who rode Princeful, aggravated an old neck injury when the pair were brought down. The former champion jockey was forced onto the sidelines for ten weeks with the same injury last summer. However, after receiving treatment yesterday he plans to ride out tomorrow before returning to race-riding at Ascot on Friday.

JENNY PITMAN was yesterday only "hopeful" that her high-class staying hunter, Princeful, will be able to race again. X-rays show that he fractured a pedal bone in his left hind leg when brought down, on his first run over fences at Doncaster on Monday.

The trainer, who initially thought the gelding had sprained a joint, said Princeful had "a comfortable night" but added: "The prognosis for a return to racing, while we are hopeful, must be guarded."

Princeful won the Bonnysprint Stayers' Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival in 1998 and gained another grade one win,

after a prolonged duel with Deano's Beeno, in the Smurfit Long Walk Hurdle at Ascot last month.

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A fractured pedal bone is a potentially career-ending injury and caused the retirement of three-time Gold Cup winner Arkle in 1968.

Pitman had high hopes that Princeful would be able to win the millennium Gold Cup, and had even entered him for this year's race before he had jumped a fence in public.

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FOOTBALL

Redknapp wants Lee as part of reshuffle

By GEORGE CAULKIN AND STEPHEN WOOD

HARRY REDKNAPP, the West Ham United manager, last night signalled his intention to reinvest swiftly a significant slice of the £7.5 million that the club received from the sale of John Hartson to Wimbledon last week by making an inquiry about Rob Lee, Newcastle United's England international.

Having taken Marco Negri on loan from Rangers until the end of the season, a midfield player and a right back remain Redknapp's priorities. Though Ruud Gullit, the Newcastle manager, identified Lee, 33 next month, as a crucial cog in his plans shortly after taking control at St James' Park, a Newcastle source said that a bid of around £2 million would be sufficient to take the player to East London.

Lee, who signed a new three-year contract only last summer, has continually maintained his desire to remain in the North East for the rest of his career, despite near-constant rumours to the contrary since his arrival from Charlton Athletic in 1992. "I have always wanted to stay at Newcastle," he said after agreeing his new deal.

A move to the club that he supported as a boy would prove a considerable pull, however, and while he knew nothing of West Ham's interest



Lee: transfer speculation

when contacted last night, Lee retains a home close to Upton Park.

Gullit will reply to Redknapp's bid by renewing his courtship of Eyal Berkovic, West Ham's Israel international midfield player. Any swap arrangement would need to include a £2 million settlement in West Ham's favour,

although whether Redknapp would wish to lose Berkovic after disposing of Hartson is open to question.

The FA Premier League has

imposed a suspended fine on

Aston Villa over their refusal

to pay Brighton £200,000 for

Gareth Barry, their 17-year-old

defender, and diverted

some of Villa's television mon-

ey to the Nationwide League

third division club.

Villa had paid Brighton an

initial £150,000, as ordered by

a transfer tribunal, but then

refused to hand over the

£200,000 that they were told to

pay when Barry made 20

appearances for the club,

claiming that the younger

was overpriced and demand-

ing that the tribunal revealed

its reasons for the ruling.

The Premier League Board

stepped in, gave the £200,000

to Brighton and handed Villa a suspended fine of £16,000,

which will be called in if Villa do not pay up when Barry reaches other landmarks.

Ole Gunnar Solskjær, the

Manchester United striker,

yesterday reiterated that he

finds it preferable to be a

reserve at Old Trafford rather

than a first-team regular elsewhere, in the light of suggestions that West Ham are pre-

paring an approach.

Solskjær, scorer of ten goals

this season, is behind Andy

Cole and Dwight Yorke in the

pecking order, which could

damage his Norway international future, but the £5.5 million-rated striker said: "It's too big a club to leave

behind and I want to win as

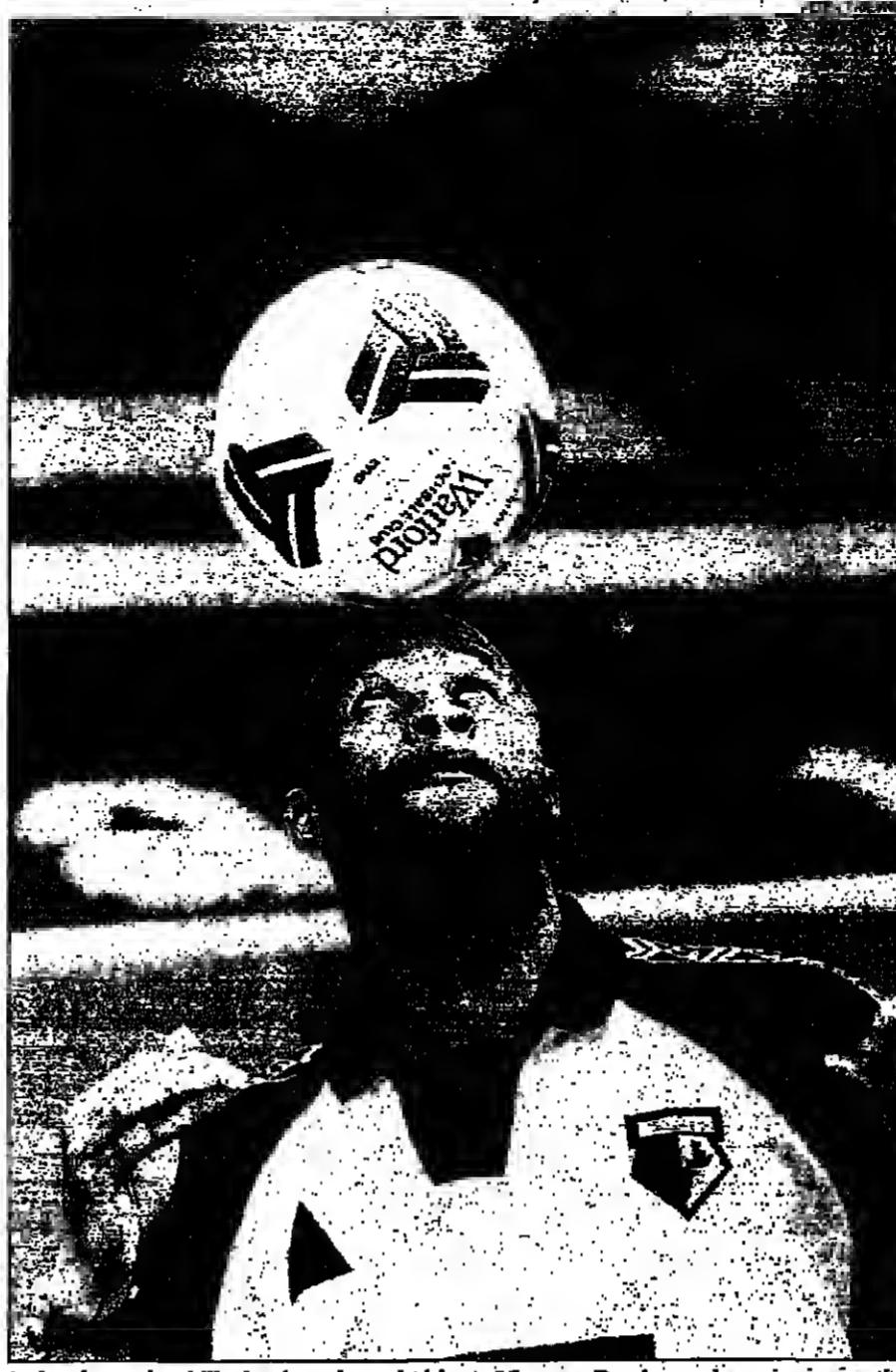
much as I can with United."

The entertainment at Vicarage Road, after which Iroha will be presented with a commemorative plaque, dovetails neatly with Watford's vigorous stance against racism in the sport and Yibose's hoped-for future links with the Kick Racism Out Of Football Campaign. "We'd like to think Saturday can have a dual purpose," Onuora said.

Iroha, who has made fleeting appearances in the past two World Cup finals, began his career with Flash Flamin-

Defender going for a song

Russell Kempson
on the warm
weekend welcome
awaiting
Watford's recruit
from Nigeria



Iroha shows the skills that have brought him to Vicarage Road — and a unique reception

'It is a big honour. I hope it's not too cold for the dancers'

gos in Nigeria and has played for ASEC Mimosas, of Ivory Coast, Vitesse Arnhem, in Holland, San Jose Clash and Washington DC United, in the United States and Elche, the Spanish second division club. A trial with Bristol Rovers earlier this season proved fruitless — "I don't think they could afford me," he said — before he joined Watford.

"Everyone has been great to me, they have helped me

settle," he said, "but I miss my family so much. I have never been away from them for so long."

Yibose's wife, Ruth, and

children Larissa, three, and

B.J. six months, will travel to England from Washington next month.

The Igbo tribe is well repre-

sented in English football; if

not by birthplace then by par-

entage, through Efan Ekoku,

of Wimbledon, Ugo Ehiogu,

of Aston Villa, and Onuora

and George Ndahl, of

Swindon. Nwankwo Kanu, Arsenal's new £4 million sign-
ing from Internazionale, will swell the group further when his work permit is processed and Yibose has already sent a letter of welcome to Highbury, a stone's throw from its headquarters.

Iroha helped to ease Kanu, 22, through his early years at the I.N.O.C. club in Owerri. "He always came to me. I gave him courage," Iroha said. "He was a young boy then but he's a man now. Saturday will bring a big honour for me and I just hope it is not too cold for the dancers. If we can win as well, it will really make my day."

Howey rises from depths of despair

BY GEORGE CAULKIN

THE realisation began to crystallise at Bradford last August. In the midst of a run in the Newcastle United reserves, Steve Howey was kicked with such force that he thought his leg was broken.

It was the night before Kenny Dalglish's departure from the club another new manager to impress, a further two weeks acting in the treatment table, more needles, more frustration. A fortnight without training and the muscles in his calves — where a jagged scar of scars is the grisly token of two years ravaged by injury — were beginning to weaken.

There was another strain. Last season had been "stop-start", this was unproductive and he couldn't picture a time when I'll be able to play two games in a row without being knocked back for a month". While packing it all in crossed his mind, that solution had been considered before, when dye was being flushed around his body to find a possible blockage in his veins, or after his amputations operation.

His wife, Angela, and the Newcastle medical staff had kept this chin-up then. Keegan initiated the switch from centre forward and he, and both his successors, have touted Howey's England credentials. Howey

has made four appearances in the last three months before Euro 96, against Bulgaria. He will not broach the subject. As Dalglish once said: "His only aim should be to get on the training ground tomorrow."

Assuming he makes that journey without mishap from now until Saturday, he will play against Bradford City in the FA Cup. All he hopes for is to stay in the team, although given that he has not agreed a new contract — his present deal expires this summer — his future is uncertain.

"I'd like to stay here, no doubt, about it. I don't really want to move from the North East," he said. That Liverpool, Sunderland and Arsenal are eyeing his position may seem irrelevant as the kind of person who, if I went into the pub, I'd have to have a drink!"

At Lilleshall, he simply stopped at how well I coped without it," he said. Newcastle's Christmas party, "complete with sheep's heart" and "Meat Kamp" — was remarkable for another reason. Howey

Mabbutt calls it a day

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

GARY MABBUTT has been forced to retire from football after failing to recover from a serious injury. The former Tottenham Hotspur defender had spent four months in rehabilitation after surgery on a fragmented left knee and had been considering offers from other clubs after Tottenham decided against renewing his contract last summer. Those plans have now been abandoned on the advice of a specialist.

Mabbutt, 37, was found to be diabetic in his early teens and once lapsed into a coma when he missed an insulin injection. He had his cheekbone shattered in a collision with John Fashanu in 1993 and broke his leg on the opening day of the 1996-97 season.

But highlights of his career, 16 years of which were spent at White Hart Lane, included a UEFA Cup winner's medal in 1984 and lifting the FA Cup as captain of Tottenham in 1991. He made 518 appearances for

Tottenham, scoring 36 goals, but the injuries caught up with him.

On his retirement, Mabbutt said: "It was a hard decision to make after my 21 years — five at Bristol Rovers and 16 at Tottenham — as a professional footballer because I have enjoyed my career immensely, but the demands and rigours that professional football

brings run out."

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Wey rise
n depth
despair

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

SPORT 41

TENNIS

Rusedski makes early call on survival instincts

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN MELBOURNE

GREG RUSEDSKI was entitled to savour his first victory of the year at the Australian Open here yesterday. The Briton shrugged off a back problem, a shortage of confidence, a rowdy chant-leader, an overzealous ball boy and Scott Draper, a man bristling with intent, to put the smile back on his uncharacteristically sombre face.

Rusedski's 7-6, 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 victory was gained the hard way after Draper, world-ranked No 43, played a poor tie-break to drop the opening set. He then threatened to overwhelm Rusedski, who fended off four break points in the third before snaring the set, on his first opportunity, with a winning volley off the frame of his racket. "You buy the racket; you might as well use the whole thing," he quipped.

Draper then squandered the initiative in the fourth-set tie-break. He made three successive errors, the first a double fault when leading 5-4, to hand Rusedski, seeded No 8, a second-round encounter with Paul Goldstein, a qualifier from the United States.

Memories of Rusedski's two first-round defeats this year dissolved in the wake of his triumph. However, he has fresh concerns on his mind after requiring court-side treatment to his back.

Had a few muscle spasms after practice on Friday," he said. "It turned out fine after a good stretch and some anti-inflammatory tablets." Rusedski coped manfully with a swirling wind, which can affect his service rhythm. "These are the sort of days where upsets can easily happen," he said.

Happier they certainly did. Carlos Moyà, seeded No 4 after a banner year in 1998, succumbed to Nicolas Kiefer, a quarter-finalist here last year. Kiefer obliged 6-7, 6-4, 7-6, 6-3 and now has an excellent opportunity to reach the same stage.

Two other seeds in Kiefer's half of the draw perished yesterday. Albert Costa, seeded No 12, fell in four sets to Martin Damm, while Cedric Pioline, seeded No 13, was spared no embarrassment by Leyton Hewitt, the emerging talent from Australia.



Kournikova has a forehand during her victory over Craybas

RUGBY UNION

Why England failed to reach an accord

BY MARK SOUSTER

RUGBY supporters could be forgiven for feeling non-plussed by the Byzantine events of the past 24 hours. One minute England are out of the Five Nations Championship, the next they are back in, having made a rapid volte-face. The root cause of the dispute, on the surface at least, is the revenue from multimillion-pound television deals.

In 1996, England broke with tradition and signed a five-year contract with BSkyB worth £87.5 million, £22.5 million of which was earmarked for club rugby, and the remaining £65 million for Five Nations matches at Twickenham and autumn fixtures against southern hemisphere countries, plus other club games, including the Varsity match.

The fact that England chose to act unilaterally led to their temporary expulsion from the championship at that time. They were readmitted only after they had signed the peace accord, which set out two fundamental principles — that the countries would act collectively and revenue would be distributed equally. This was not

possible in the short term because of the BSkyB deal, but holds true after 2002 when the contract expires.

At the time, England agreed to have a valuation put on the Five Nations element of the £65 million, their alleged failure to live up to that pledge led directly to their expulsion on

Ivan Francesco, the former Italy centre, has died after a suspected heart attack at his home in Tivoli. Francesco, 31, won 38 caps between 1990 and 1997 and was central to the emergence of rugby in his country. He was the youngest of four brothers, all international players.

Mondays. From 1996 to mid-1998 the parties attempted to reach agreement between themselves when it subsequently proved impossible to agree, an independent value, an accountant named Arthur Harverd, was appointed. At that point the Rugby Football

Union refused to acknowledge the legality of the accord per se. Harverd will now consider private ministerial submissions from all sides on February 5.

Three years ago it was estimated that the Five Nations portion was worth more about £45 million of the £65 million — equal to a nominal £2.3 million each for Ireland, Wales and Scotland over five years. That sum would be put in to a common pool, together with £32 million from the Celtic nations — the bulk of the proceeds from their own deal negotiated with the BBC. With further ancillary income the total in the pool would amount to £70 million. Whether Harverd agrees with that assessment remains to be seen.

The accord provides a formula for the distribution of that money. Ninety per cent would be divided between the four participants — thus, on the above figures, each would receive £3.5 million annually for five years. Another five per cent would be prizemoney for the Five Nations, and the remaining five per cent apportioned according to the number of clubs in each union.

Historically, France, being in a different legal jurisdiction, negotiated their own television deal, a provision allowed for in the accord as long as the RFU had the rights to negotiate individually. The RFU believed France should pool its revenue, a condition England attached to acceptance of the accord this weekend.

Television revenue underpins union finances. The Scots have an overdraft of £11 million. England's debt is £34 million and Wales will need a loan of more than £50 million for the Millennium Stadium. Thus, jeopardising that revenue would spell financial suicide.

Richmond have rearranged their Allied-Dunbar Premier first division fixture against Leicester for next Tuesday, at the Madejski Stadium in Reading. The match should have taken place last night, but was postponed because of a waterlogged pitch.

THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP: Third-round replay Hartlepool v Barnet, Non-leagues v West Bromwich.

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First division: Boulton v Wycombe (7.15), Bridgwater v Bristol (7.15).

CLUB MATCH: Cambridge University v RAF (7.15).

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Second division: London Knights v Bristol (7.15), Southampton v Croydon (7.15).

NETBALL: League: Premier division: Birmingham v London (7.15),

Second division: London v Preston (7.15), Final division: Middlesex v Bedford (7.15).

TODAY'S FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated

FA Cup

Third-round replay

Notts County v Sheffield United (7.45)

Scottish League

Second division

Luton Town v East Fife

Third division

Dumbarton v Berwick

Tottenham's Scottish Cup

Second-round replay

Clydebank v Queen's Park

FA JUNIOR TRAPFC: Third round:

Rochdale v Northwich (7.45)

DR MARSH LEAGUE: League Cup

First round, second leg: Bolton

Round 1: Salford v Bolton

UNION LEAGUE: Challenge Cup

Final division: Romford v Moseley

Second-round replay: Bishop Auckland v Fawcett Colliery

RYMAN LEAGUES: Second division

Harrow v Hemel Hempstead (7.0)

Third division: Southend v Croydon (7.0)

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OTHER SPORT

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London Knights v Bristol (7.15),

South Valley Tigers v London Towers (7.15)

ICE HOCKEY: Sekonda Superleague

Avr Scottish Eagles v Bracknell Bees (7.00)



Rusedski shows his delight after winning an eventful match against Draper in four sets

Agassi skips Davis Cup

ANDRE AGASSI yesterday ruled himself out of the United States team to face Great Britain in the Davis Cup, ensuring that his country will be seriously under-strength for the tie in Birmingham on April 2. (Julian Muscat writes)

Agassi, ranked No 6 in the world, joins Pete Sampras, the world No 1, and Michael Chang in bypassing a tie that brings together the two nations that established the Davis Cup 100 years ago.

"It doesn't fit into my plans with reference to my goals

this year," Agassi said after routing Herman Gunning, of Argentina, in the first round of the Australian Open.

Agassi said the row he had with the United States Tennis Federation over the venue for his country's semi-final defeat by Italy last year had influenced his decision.

"I was very frustrated and drained emotionally through it all and that, I'm sure, played a part," he said.

The United States will choose their two singles players from Todd Martin, Jimbo-Gambill and Jim

Courier. All have confirmed their availability, but Greg Rusedski, the Great Britain No 2, kept his guard up on hearing of Agassi's absence.

"Obviously it's going to be a little better than seeing Agassi and Sampras across the net," Rusedski ventured. "But Martin, the way he's playing, will probably be ranked in the top ten by then and Gambill has beaten Tim Henman every time they have played. It is going to be very difficult for us."

Britain meet the United States in the first round of the World Group.

OLYMPICS

Haggman resigns in bribes scandal

By ROB HUGHES

PIRJO HAGGMAN yesterday became the first Olympian to resign after being implicated in the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Games bribery scandal. A 100 and 400 metres runner at the 1976 and 1980 Olympics and a PE teacher in Finland, Haggman in 1981 became the first woman on the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

A physical education teacher in Finland, Haggman, 47, pleaded guilty yesterday to naivety, not corruption, and said she had not broken the Olympic Oath. Nonetheless, Juan Antonio Samaranch, the president of the IOC, accepted with alacrity, and with thanks, her resignation.

Haggman's husband had been named as a beneficiary of Salt Lake City favour when he was contracted to carry out an environmental study for the bidding committee. This conflict of interest pales in comparison with IOC members being linked to gifts, scholarships and land deals amounting to \$600,000.

So far, 13 letters have gone out to members among the 115-strong IOC but, despite reports impugning senior members, Haggman is so far the sole resignation. Others must appear before an IOC panel on Sunday, but may cling to their seats until mid-March.

Meanwhile, the Mayor of Adelaide claimed that three members of the Commonwealth Games Organisation — from Sri Lanka, Pakistan and an unnamed African country — sought five-year scholarships for relatives in exchange for votes towards Adelaide's failed bid for the Commonwealth Games in 1998.

Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport, yesterday insisted on BBC Radio 5 Live that the Football Association's financial assistance to nations that have Fifa votes for the 2006 World Cup should be seen in the nature of "overseas development aid" ... that is not the same as people pushing money over the table in brown paper envelopes".

SNOOKER

Small wonder lifts Scotland

By PHIL YATES

CHRIS SMALL, the least experienced member of snooker's reassembled "dream team", played a vital role as Scotland continued their relentless progress towards a place in the Nations Cup final by beating Wales 8-3 in Newcastle yesterday.

The pedigree of John Higgins, Stephen Hendry and Alan McManus is well-known but, with two semi-final appearances in world-ranking events the highlight of his eight-year professional career, Small's ability to cope with the unique demands of team play was open to question.

Small, however, won both of his singles frames during Scotland's 8-3 victory over England on Saturday and was equally impressive against the Welsh, who had high hopes of an upset after overcoming Ireland 8-3 in their opening match.

"It has been a great start to the tournament for me as an individual and obviously for the lads as a whole," Small said. "I feel quite relaxed, having three guys like I've got alongside me, but it's certainly different from just thinking about yourself."

Small partnered Hendry to beat the pairing of Darren Morgan and Dominic Dale, made a 66 break in defeating Dale and calmly stroked in a tricky black to a middle pocket against Matthew Stevens.

McManus, who initiated the rout with a 100 break against Mark Williams in the first frame, also won his two singles and Hendry prevailed in two of three, but all agreed that Small was the outstanding performer.

Scotland, whose last international involvement resulted in an effortless triumph at the 1996 World Cup, must now bear either Northern Ireland or Friday or Ireland on Saturday to guarantee their participation in the final.

SKY CLUB	Depth (cm) L U	Runs to Pass	Conditions On/P	Weather (Spm) C	Last snow
Andorra Soldeu	80 100	Good	Open	Powder	Fine 2 - 17/1
Austria Kitzbühel	20 80	Good	Hard	Variety	Fine 1 - 14/1
Switzerland St Anton	30 300	Good	Open	Variety	Sun 0 - 14/1
Canada Lake Louise	100 140	Good	Open	Powder	Fair - 1 - 18/1
France Alpe d'Huez	70 180	Good	Open	Variety	Sun 3 - 18/1
Argentina San Carlos de Bariloche	50 145	Good	Open	Variety	Fine -1 - 14/1
Spain Panticosa	80 220	Good	Open	Variety	Sun 0 - 14/1
La Clusaz	65 110	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun 2 - 14/1
La Tania	68 103	Good	Hard	Variety	Sun 3 - 14/1
Les Arcs	64 180	Good	Open	Crusty	Fine 4 - 14/1
Levi	55 120	Good	Open	Variety	Sun 3 - 14/1
Monte Rosa	50 190	Good	Open	Variety	Sun 3 - 14/1
Tignes	65 170	Good	Open	Variety	Sun 3 - 14/1
Val Thorens	70 150	Good	Open	Variety	Sun 3 - 14/1
Val d'Isère	65 150	Good	Open	Variety	Sun 1 - 14/1
Italy Cervinia	45 160	Good	Open	Variety	Fine 0 - 14/1

A little rationality, s'il vous plait

Awful parodist named David McGillivray once wrote a French farce called *Chase Me Down Farndale Avenue, S'il Vous Plait*. The set comprised nothing but doors. The cast went in and out of them, and then out and in of them, with — as McGillivray himself gravely might have put it — hilarious consequences.

It was belly-achingly funny and could not be taken seriously for a second, even as a parody, because it parodied parodies at the same time as it parodied farce. All you could do was sit back and enjoy it.

Rugby union has become rather like that. Lie back and think of Farndale Avenue. *Jouez Au Rugby S'il Vous Plait* has become a parody of a farce. It has gone beyond weeping, beyond anger and ascended to the rarefied McGillivray-esque heights of pure laughter.

England is the character that sees most of the action and action, of course, consists of going in and out of doors. Yesterday morning, I was writing about England's expulsion

from the Five Nations Championship. Now, as the evening begins and my earlier piece has been retired to the wicker file in the corner, I am writing about England's return to the Five Nations Championship.

Which will soon be, of course, the Six Nations Championship, because Italy are supposed to join next year. Or perhaps it will be the Five Nations Championship, if England are thrown out again. Or — well, perm anything you like, no bit of nonsense is too much for the subject.

There was an Englishman, a Scotsman and an Irishman, and they sat down to talk about rugby ... Push it as far as you dare, and then dare a little more: those are McGillivray Rules and rugby union adheres to them.

It is not the first time that England have been thrown out and come straight back in again. Or perhaps they were only threatened with exit through the nearest door. Or perhaps the other four nations all walked out through their own separate doors, there being, as I say, plenty of doors

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

on the set. I forget. I really can't be expected to keep up with every twist and turn of the plot, especially when my belly aches so much from laughing.

So what else is happening in rugby union? Have you heard the one about the club that is buying up the other club in a cunning plan to ensure promotion? Rugby union made such an appalling mess of amateurism and it has made a still

worse mess of professionalism. Amateurism was a farce, professionalism in rugby union is a parody of a farce.

But then you look back to those rather splendid internationals of the autumn — resurgent Wales, England beaming the All Blacks. And you begin to get a little irritated as well. Sport's incessant squabbles about money are not only wearisome, they are also compromising our pleasures.

I suspect most of the people who take pleasure in sport find themselves in the same philosophical position. I don't care what you do or how you divvy up the loot or who's to blame or who's the good guy or who's the bad: just get on to the pitch and bloody well play.

The game's the thing. And not playing the game is — well, not playing the game. And any kind of action that loses us sporting action will also lose our sympathy. Recently, basketball ended its dispute: 190 days of deadlock about how best to dispose of US\$2 billion. One or other of the two sides — players or owners — must have felt badly done by.

My heart has been steadily

not bleeding for them. Then we had the recent episode of the West Indies cricket team, sulking in their tents at Heathrow while matches were supposed to be going on in South Africa.

The dispute, and the subsequent Test series, when it was eventually played — just completed, with South Africa winning 50 — was a disaster. It is a blow from which West Indies cricket, and therefore international cricket, will take a long while to recover.

A sporting dispute is not like a dispute between unions and management. A sporting dispute is something that involves, and invades everyone who cares for sport. It feels — perhaps irrationally — like a personal attack. It does, after all, affect ourselves and our pleasures.

People have said that agents, or sponsors, or television, will kill sport. Or journalists. But it is sport that is killing sport: sportsmen are killing sport, and so — and especially — are sporting administrators.

sporting dispute is

about getting to the bottom of things.

McRae and Nicky Grist, his co-driver, weave their Ford Focus into a prominent position yesterday during the journey from Gap to Monte Carlo



McRae and Nicky Grist, his co-driver, weave their Ford Focus into a prominent position yesterday during the journey from Gap to Monte Carlo

McRae confounds the critics

FROM JEREMY HART IN MONTE CARLO

THE Hungarian Grand Prix last summer. In the baking paddock, Martin Whitaker, Ford's European head of motor sport, was hot property. News had just broken that Colin McRae was moving to the Ford rally team for a figure reported to be £6 million.

"Suddenly, every grand-prix driver contemplating a move wanted to drive for Ford," Whitaker said, with a grin.

"They figured that if we were really paying a rally driver the sort of figures bandied about, then we had money to burn. That's not true. We wanted the best driver possible and we paid the market price. We think it will prove a good investment."

Five months on, Whitaker is grinning like the proverbial Cheshire cat this morning. His £6 million man is just one place off a podium finish at the Monte Carlo Rally — his first outing for Ford — in a car that most insiders had predicted would not score a point until the spring.

"Colin has driven perfectly."

Whitaker said. "When you make a new rally car, you dare not hope for more than a finish to start with, but the fact that the car has been on the pace and has come close to setting fastest-stage times is outstanding."

McRae and the Martini Ford Focus provide potentially the most potent cocktail in the rallying world. With the Ford name likely to be superseded in Formula One by Jaguar, rallying will become Ford's leading publicity machine in Europe.

Spending millions on man and machine is not an extravagance, but an investment. A rally team needs an injection of more than £15 million annually to compete at the highest level.

Enticed by the millions and consequent trappings, such as a Jaguar for his wife, Alison, McRae only signed for Ford once he had seen the design of the radical Focus, with its secret transmission system.

POSITIONS

MONTE CARLO RALLY (after ten special stages): 1 T. Mäkinen and R. Manniannni (Fiat/Mitsubishi Lancer); 2 M. McRae and N. Grist (Ford Focus); 3 P. Solberg and J. Petter (Subaru Impreza); 4 S. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Subaru Impreza); 5 C. McRae and N. Grist (Ford Focus); 6 D. Sivonen (Ford Escort); 7 D. Sivonen (Ford Escort); 8 H. Rönnqvist and R. Petter (Ford Escort); 9 S. Kankkunen and J. Repo (Subaru Impreza); 10 R. Burridge and G. Stobart (Ford Escort); 11 J. Tanak and T. Kihara (Mitsubishi Lancer).

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CRICKET

Emburey says pitch it up

FROM THASRY PETROPOULOS IN HARARE

ENGLAND A will face their sternest examination so far, and possibly the toughest of their six-week tour of Zimbabwe, when they meet Mashonaland in a four-day match starting here today.

The very mention of Mashonaland brings back memories of the senior England side's embarrassing defeat by the province two winters ago.

The Mashonaland top six of Alastair Campbell, captain of the national team, the Flower brothers, Grant and Andy, Murray Goodwin, Craig Wishart and Gavin Rennie could fill the same positions in the Zimbabwe Test side and with Paul Strang and Everton Matambanadzo included among the bowlers, there is no doubt the quality of the opposition.

It is in the bowling that England A have had most of their headaches. Steve Harmison, the Durham strike bowler, who is certain to play today, and Paul Hutchison have re-

covered from stiff backs and Darren Thomas's thigh strain has almost healed, but doubt remains over Melvyn Bentz, who has a damaged groin.

With all 15 players in the squad guaranteed an outing in

Chris Cairns hit the fifth-fastest one-day century to guide New Zealand to a 70-run win over India in Christchurch yesterday. Cairns, in his hundredth limited-overs match, totalled 115, his century coming in 75 balls, including five fours and six sixes.

One of the two first-class matches before the unofficial Tests begin, it is unlikely that Betts will be risked here.

In the two limited-overs

warm-up matches so far, much of the seam bowling has been inconsistent and John

Harris proves as good as her word

MARGARET HARRIS, of Netley Abbey, Southampton, is the winner of *The Times* Jumbo sports crossword and will receive a sum of champagne worth £40. Miss Harris's entry was the first drawn from all those correct ones received by the closing date last week.

Simon Smith, of Middlesbrough, wins a copy of *The Davis Cup: Celebrating 100 Years Of International Tennis*, by Richard Evans (Ebury Press, £14.99), mail order 01206 255800) and signed by John McEnroe, Tim Henman, Margaret Court, of Dunfermline, Scotland, wins a copy signed by Boris Becker. Five further runners-up — Trevor Hewitt, of Bedford; John Green, of Johnston, near Carmarthen, Wales; C. McMahon, of London E1; Adrian Brodin, of London N2; and Mrs E. Drake, of Harleston, Norfolk — will receive copies of

the car is a disaster, I could bow out," McRae said. "But there is no way I want that to happen ... in fact, it won't happen. It's not a possibility. I shall make sure of that."

McRae would have finished the leg from Gap to Monte Carlo in second place yesterday had he not gamblized on using slick tyres for the precipitous Sisteron stage. Snow at the summit negated the benefit that enjoyed on the run up and down the mountain.

"We lost around two minutes sliding about on the snow with the slick tyres, but finished the stage only 36 seconds behind the fastest time, so that proves how fast the car was on the dry, asphalt sections," McRae said.

On the next stage, Gilles Paizzi, the overnight leader, lost first place when he spun his privately entered Subaru. Inheriting the lead was Tommi Mäkinen, the world champion, in a Mitsubishi. The Finn has a minute cushion with only the final four stages today remaining.

"If, at the end of this year,

engine. If he had, the Scot might not have been so quick to sign on the dotted line.

On Sunday, the water pump was found to be illegal, but was allowed to start at Monte Carlo under appeal.

However, if the FIA, the sport's world governing body, determines one and for all that the water pump is illegal in a meeting next month before the Swedish Rally, McRae could be temporarily off the rally circuit. The Ford team will be out of rallying for at least two events while they hurriedly redesign the pump.

"Whether the Focus is as competitive with another water pump we will have to see," a rival team's rally engineer said. "I would doubt it."

McRae always knew that 1999 was going to be a year to test his patience. Whether the Scot has the strength of character to risk a second year out of the championship frame, though, is doubtful.

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Enigmatic variations on using a pixie hood

When you hear that the odds against deciphering Germany's Enigma code during the Second World War were many times greater than the odds against winning the National Lottery, it conjures up an image of Bletchley Park, the country house near Milton Keynes, as a vast bingo hall. Here you feel punters — a curious army of academics, crossword fanatics, chess players, schoolboys and undergraduates — competed feverishly to yell "Housey, housey" as soon as they had cracked the latest German transmission.

Obviously it wasn't quite that weird. It was weird. Sarah Baring, who worked there, recalled in *Station X* (Channel 4), that: "There was one cryptographer with red hair and a red beard and he studied Japanese in the evenings as a relief from his cryptography. But in the winter he wore a blue pixie hood on his beard. A pixie hood's

the thing you put on babies' heads. And I always thought that was very strange. I never knew quite why he did it."

Gwen Watkins, a WAAF at Bletchley, remembered Joshi Cooper well. "He would walk round the lake every summer evening with a coffee cup. And when he'd finished his coffee he'd look in a demented way at the coffee cup as though wondering what to do with it and throw it straight over his shoulder into the lake. Every evening." These geniuses, luckily, were the people on whom our lives depended. "At least half of the people there, I would have thought — outside Bletchley — absolutely mad."

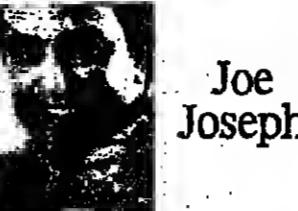
Their achievement is still breathtaking. According to Tony Sale, of the Bletchley Park Trust, "If we just one message on an Enigma machine today, it would still take a Super Kray computer — the fastest in the world — a year to go

through searching for that one message without supporting evidence as to what the message settings might have been."

It must have taken them quite a while to twig that it even was in code. German being a jangle of consonants at the best of times; So you can imagine what sort of people they drafted in to crack it. Arthur Levinson, one of the code-breakers, remembers: "Anthropologists, paleoanthropologists and even an occasional lawyer turned out to be part of the knack." Their descendants are still engaged in similar work today, only this time the Germans are on our side and the indecipherable messages concern such European Union matters as the euro and the harmonisation of Europe.

It is quaint to see — among the riveting archive footage dug up for this four-part series — some film of

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

Second World War German code-breakers undergoing training: they are sitting on a platform deciphering Morse code while the platform is rocked like a rodeo horse, so as to train them to decipher Morse code under any conditions. Meanwhile their English counterparts were wearing blue pixie hoods on their beards and tossing the crockery into the lake. Maybe this behaviour was deliberately or

orchestrated to wrong-foot the enemy (First German Spy: "I think this Bletchley place is the nerve centre of Britain's code-breaking operations.") Second German Spy: "Have you seen what guy over there with that baby's blue pixie hood? I'll bet you a hundred marks that this is a lunatic asylum.")

But they weren't all code-breaking geniuses. Geoffrey Tandy, a marine biologist, was among the first to be recruited. Nigel Forward, a Bletchley code-breaker, recalls how Tandy joined the team: "He was an expert in cryptograms. They're a very elementary form of biological life. And somebody said, 'Ah, cryptograms, that's what we want' and sent him to Bletchley with the slight error that they were really looking for people who were good at *cryptoGRAMS*." But Tandy probably survived without anybody even noticing. Compared with wearing pixie hoods and tossing coffee cups in the lake, being

able to hold forth on the subject of elementary biological lifeforms must have seemed quite normal.

burn the money there will be no problem. No money, no problem. Sometimes it's the simplest solutions that crack the code.

Final mystery of the evening: the Japanese. In *Great Railway Journeys* (BBC2), Fergal Keane travelled from one end of Japan to the other and detected a mood of change in the Japanese people. "By my journey's end I had a feeling that the tyranny of the group would not survive here. Japan becoming a society of individuals — now that's an exciting journey." The trouble is Japan always seems to visitors as if it is at the crossroads, that everything is about to change, that traditions are melting like an ice-cube in your palm. But they never do. When the war was over, all the Bletchley staff were reassigned to trying to fathom what makes the Japanese tick. That man with the pixie hood has been working flat out and still hasn't cracked this one.

BBC1
6.00am Business Breakfast (60372)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) (60001)
9.00 Kirby (T) (645469)
9.45 The Vanessa Show (T) (581838)
10.05 News: Weather (T) (777733)
11.00 Real Stories (773731)
11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (778448)
11.55 News: Weather (T) (198065)
12.00pm Call My Bluff (67440)
12.30 Battersea Dogs' Home (2982)
1.00 One O'Clock News; Weather (T) (60448)
1.30 Regional News: Weather (3647948)
1.40 Neighbours (T) (6515828)
2.05 Ironside (T) (7441759)
2.55 Going for a Song (333614)
3.20 The Weather Show (T) (276765)
3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (2520294)
3.45 Little Mississ (962085)
3.50 Chucklevision (885982) 4.10 See It Saw It (3584579) 4.35 The Wile House (1493001) 5.00 Newsround (5203730)
5.10 Blue Peter (5370255)
5.35 Neighbours (T) (608198)
6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (T) (91)
6.30 Regional News Magazine (643)



The leopard is perfectly adapted for hunting at night (7pm)

7.00 Wildlife on... One Insight into the nocturnal hunting techniques of the leopard, which relies on smell and hearing to capture its prey in pitch darkness (T) (14488)
7.30 Dream House: John Weir struggles to complete the glass roof (T) (227)
8.00 Changing Rooms: Anna Ryder Richardson brings a little Miami glamour to a Cathédral living room (T) (9376)
8.30 Battersea Dogs' Home: A litter of puppies delivered by Cesarean section are given slim chances of survival (T) (88310)
8.50 National Lottery: Amazing Luck Stories: How rare footage of the <i>Titanic</i> was discovered (T) (53001)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News: Weather (T) (2239)
9.30 The X-Files part one: Mulder and Scully search desperately for clues to a series of mass killings in which UFO abductees are being burnt alive (T) (68785)
10.15 Inside Story: New series: Behind the scenes at Billingsgate fish market (1/5) (190409)
11.10 Lust for Murder (TVB 1993) A man takes a holiday with his wife, little realising she intends to make it a vacation he'll never forget. Starring Virginia Madsen and Richard Thomas. Directed by Nathaniel Gutman (T) (22239)
12.30 Moving Target (ITV 1988) A teenage boy returns home from summer camp to find his family missing. Thriller, starring Jason Bateman. Directed by Chris Thompson (T) (9703268)
2.00 Weather (9304518)
2.05 BBC News 24 (74142376)

7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Dilly the Dinosaur (2960097) 7.05 Teletubbies (2703204) 7.30 Secret Squirrel and Co (5821236) 7.35 The Petrol Wield Show (20067/8) 8.15 Reward (84652)
8.40 Postman Pat: Street Party (5830556) 8.45 The Petrol Wield Show (20067/8) 8.50 Brum (6004223) 8.50 Images of Style (7821236) 9.10 What's What? Why? Why? (7811236) 9.25 The Art (5623310) 9.45 Words and Pictures (501846)
10.00 Teletubbies (501846)
10.15 Trisha (T) (334565)
10.30 This Morning (T) (2490157)
12.15pm HTV News (T) (10020)
1.00 WEST: Next Richard Wyatt, Polly Lloyd and correspondents are in Clevedon, where they review local developments (91556)
1.00 WALES: Shortland Street Jenny burles the hatchet (91556)
1.30 Snooker: Nations Cup. Live coverage from Newcastle as the Republic of Ireland take on Northern Ireland (T) (55237407)
3.15 HTV News Headlines (T) (2755202)
3.20 HTV News (T) (275293)
3.25 CITV: Mapotop's Shop (2742556) 3.35 Teeddybears' (2811778) 3.45 Junmai (8200438) 4.0 Whizzwag (9348759)
4.40 Mad for it (787839)
5.10 A Country Practice Esme and Perce embark on a quest (787402)
5.40 HTV Early Evening News (T) (246407)
5.55 HTV Crimestoppers (20046)
6.00 Home and Away Sally has a spot of matchmaking (T) (586136)
6.25 WEST: Wales Tonight (T) (418914)
6.30 WEST: HTV Weather (T) (610327)
6.30 Emmerdale: Confused he loves Rachel (T) (6556)
7.00 Coronation Street Vera looks for a job (T) (223)

9.00 **Murky... Blues** Dramatic footage following the Merseyside police force in their efforts to contain wars over drug territories (T) (448391)



Ben and Jerry, who started their own ice-cream company (9.50pm)

9.50 Blood on the Carpet Two hippies who fought the giant conglomerate Haagen-Dazs by producing rival ice-cream (2/6) (T) (265265)
10.28 Whitbread Shorts (T) (740575)
10.30 Newlight (T) (33352)
11.15 Picture: This Polymat film capturing a cancer victim's final wishes (97438)
11.45 10x10 Short drama about a great uncle with an unusual diet (T) (272830)
11.55 Weather (540204)
12.00pm Dispatch Box Political news (33773)
12.30 BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Passing Judgments 1.00 The British Family: Sources and Myths 1.30 The French Revolution: Impact and Sources 2.00 Schools: Languages 4.00 Get By in French 5.00 Business and Training: Vocational Matters 5.30 Steps to Better Management 5.45 Open University: TV 6.35 A Language for Movement:

5.30am HTV Morning News (98662)
6.00 GMTV (560594)
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3.25 CITV: Mapotop's Shop (2742556) 3.35 Teeddybears' (2811778) 3.45 Junmai (8200438) 4.0 Whizzwag (9348759)
4.40 Mad for it (787839)
5.10 A Country Practice Esme and Perce embark on a quest (787402)
5.40 HTV Early Evening News (T) (246407)
5.55 HTV Crimestoppers (20046)

6.00am Sesame Street (76310)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (701339)
9.00 Schools: French Express (709143) 9.30 Stage-Tel-Tel (8015759) 9.45 Book Box (8003914) 10.00 Stage Two Science (725293)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (7957402)
5.25-7.00 Central News: Weather (418914)
10.30-10.40 Central News: Weather (532265)
2.55-3.15 Magistrate Judy (9812792)
4.16 Central Jobfinder '98 (9910182)
5.20-5.30 Asian Eye (4088957)

As HTV West except:
12.15-12.27pm Westcountry News (912564)
12.27-12.30 Illuminations (6752310)
1.00-1.30 Emmerdale (91556)
3.20-3.25 Westcountry News (7252933)
5.10-5.40 Home and Away (7957402)
6.00-6.30 Merlin (9810182)

